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THE

POPISH MASS,

*James Royse Yeilding*  
OR,

THE CONFORMITY OF THE CHURCH OF ROME

WITH PAGANISM,

PROVED FROM POPISH AND HEATHEN AUTHORS.

WITH

AN APPENDIX

ON THE STYLE OF SCRIPTURE, TRANSUBSTANTIATION, AURICULAR  
CONFESSION, AND EXTREME UNCTION.

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BY

THE REV. ANDREW MEAGHER,  
FORMERLY A PRIEST OF THE ROMISH CHURCH,  
WRITTEN AFTER HE HAD RENOUNCED THE ERRORS OF POPERY, AND  
PUBLICLY EMBRACED THE PROTESTANT RELIGION.

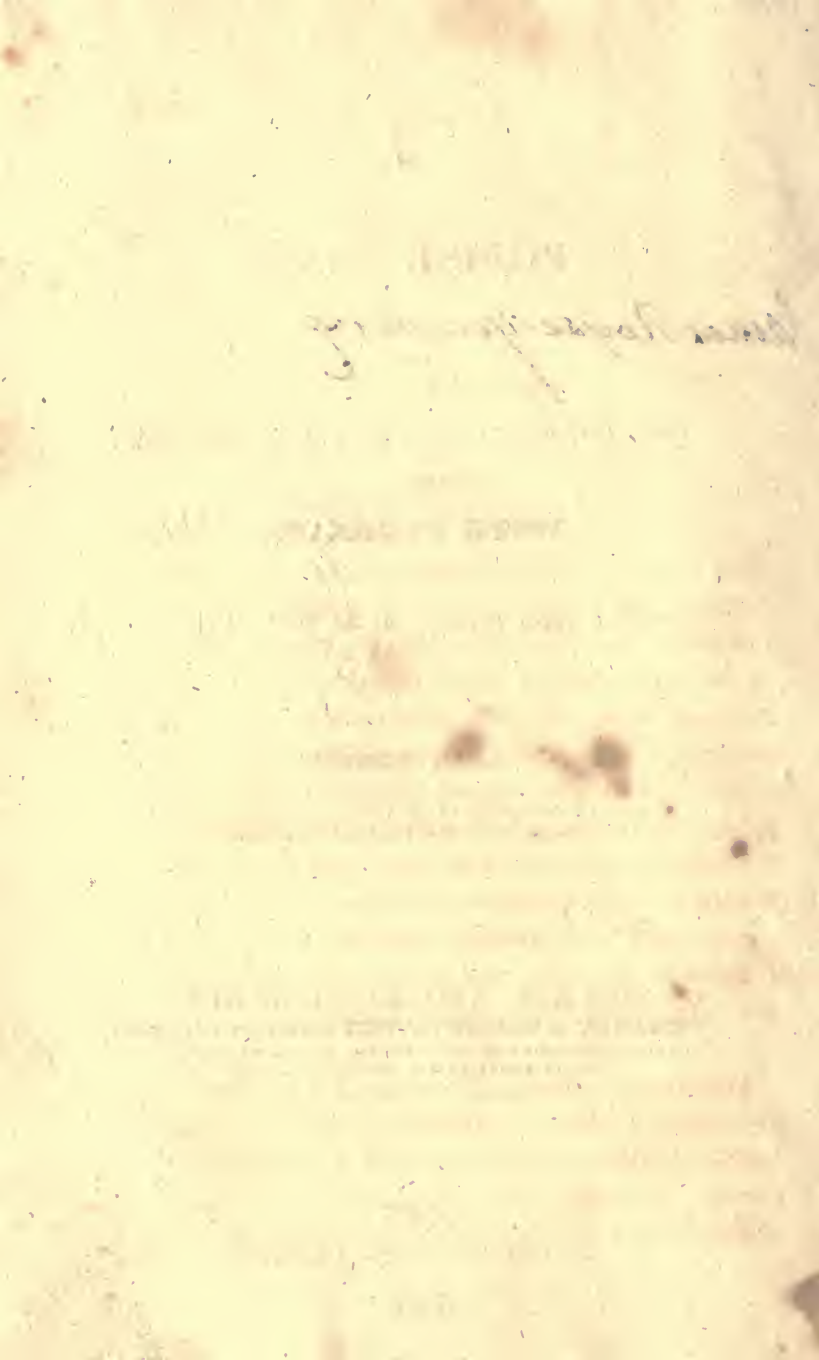
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## ADDRESS.

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**T**HE hope of serving, in some humble degree, the cause of truth and piety, has induced an obscure individual to snatch from oblivion a work which, in the estimation of every friend to truth and religious liberty, deserves handing down to remote posterity: the author having fully exposed the errors of a church, whose arrogated titles may delude the unwary, but whose bitter intolerance betrays her unchristian temper; and whose substitution of the ceremonies of men for the ordinances of Christ, subjects her to the deserved censure of the wise, and draws down upon her the awful frown of the GREAT ETERNAL.

Protestants, delivered from the iron bondage of Popery, and taking the Bible only for their guide, both in faith and practice, will be established therein, by seeing the ceremonies of a corrupt church clearly identified—not with the pure and

holy precepts—not with the dignified simplicity and impressive significance of gospel ordinances—but with the absurd dogmas of men of corrupt minds, and the unhallowed ceremonies of superstition and idolatry.

Parents, it is hoped, will feel especial pleasure in putting into the hands of their offspring a book which will guard from the reception of error, establish them in the great and glorious principles of the Reformation, make them thankful for a Protestant Government; and above all, endear to them the Word of Life—that divine instrument, destined to dispel the darkness of error, diffuse the light of truth, and guide every devout inquirer to the realms of lasting bliss.

Should this work fall into the hands of the sincere, but mistaken Roman Catholic, may it convince him of his dangerous situation, and induce him to inquire at the Fountain of all Truth, the way that leads to eternal life.

The Publisher's sincere desire is, that the period may soon arrive, when to expose the errors of the mistaken, or dispel the darkness of the ignorant, shall no longer be necessary; but when the knowledge of the LORD shall, like the light of the sun, be universal.



## INTRODUCTION.

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I HAVE no motive for publishing the following sheets, but a zeal for the propagation of true religion. Our adversaries, like the Jews, are so habitually prejudiced against the rest of mankind, especially Protestants, that they will scarce see or listen to any thing that comes from the opposite side, except it come from a convert. A convert, therefore, ought to furnish the occasion, and, in conformity to the Scripture injunctions, “when he is converted, to strengthen his brethren, by lifting up his voice like a trumpet, to show the people their errors; for, there are many who have turned away their ears from the truth, to listen to, and follow after fables and superstitions.”

If mankind were once brought to agree in the christian truths that are strictly fundamental, and every national church left unmolested in the possession of its privileges, the world would be as well united, in point of religion, as could reasonably be

expected in the present state of human nature. All occasions of furious, exterminating zeal would be precluded ; all national animosities on the score of religion stifled, and the general peace and happiness of the world, as far as depends on religion, ascertained and secured. The odious name of Heretic, would then be banished and cancelled out of the language of society ; or, if it were still retained, it would be only in this sense, that a heretic in religion, like a heretic in politics, should be so called, only while he bred disturbance where he lived.

But, as there will be disputes about religion while human affairs continue in their present situation, I would, nevertheless, have such controversies exploded out of company, and banished to the pulpit and the closet, except on very important occasions, when they could be treated with due solemnity and temper. The great design of religion, viz. brotherly love and universal benevolence, is defeated by such controversies ; and the spirits so fermented, that they scarce ever subside but with life. One will urge his own reasons, without any regard to the other's answers or objections ; and, will bear him down at last, by convincing him, that he will be of his own opinion still.

When I first read the Heathen Mythology, and took a view of the religious practices of passages, I was startled to find a perfect affinity and resem-

blance of habits, rites, ceremonies, &c. between the heathen worship, and that wherein I had been educated. I at first suspected, and at last discovered, that the doctrine of Infallibility was mere imposture and illusion. When once I was unfettered, my mind was open to a free and impartial inquiry. In tracing up the ceremonial of my religion to its source, I found it was new modelled by Numa Pompilius, but originally instituted in Egypt. Here I found the source of idolatry and superstition. From hence I traced the rise and progress of innovation and corruption, and by the way discovered how priests, availing themselves of the popular passion for pompous pageantry and mystical superstition, modelled the ceremonial of religion into what would best please the imaginations of the vulgar, and sanctioned it with a pretended alliance and communication with the Gods.

Having discovered an exact conformity between Popery and Heathenism, I examined the several modes of the christian religion, in order to find out that system of doctrine, and form of worship, whereby the principles of creation and redemption were best reconciled with each other. At last I found them shine forth in all their lustre and glory, in the doctrine of the Church of England. Accordingly, I resolved at once to become a member of her communion. But, as a conquest of early prejudices is one of the most arduous

tasks in nature, and consequently requires time, as well as deliberation and reflection ; and as those transitions are often looked upon as precipitate, and owing to a mind enamoured of novelty, to sordid and pecuniary views, or the like, I thought it no less than prudent to wait till a favourable opportunity offered, to usher me into the church with credit. In the mean time, as the love of truth cannot conceal itself long, I declared my sentiments according as occasion offered, for which I was at last pointed at and severely lectured. But when I was found to persist in the same sentiments, and to preach up the same doctrines still in private and public, the bolts of arbitrary government, blind implicitude, and slavish principles, were doubled upon me, (as upon Berengarius and others, who had the misfortune to think like rational beings,) to chain me down for ever, if possible, to the yoke of Popery.

What I have said and suffered in defence of the Protestant doctrines, ought to have the better effect even with those of the Romish communion, as it did not proceed from the prejudices of education, worldly views, or want of due information. That it was not the effect of early prejudices, is plain. That it was not for the sake of any worldly benefit, is notorious ; for I have sacrificed several temporal advantages, for the sake of truth. I had two parishes, which would have been a tenure for life. I had as good prospects of promotion as



others. Though I never was in Rome, I was known there by the cases I sent to be resolved by the congregation of cardinals, whose answers I have still by me. I have, since I conformed, received letters from some of the Doctors in Paris, inviting me to return to them, and that I should be well provided for. In a word, I had several prospects at home and abroad, that I could have realized, if I could reconcile my mind to the doctrines of Popery. It is plain, then, that I would not have embroiled myself in so many disputes and troubles in favour of the Protestant religion, had it not been the religion of my judgment and conscience, especially as I never adopted it for any temporal purpose, but remained as I was till I passed the noon of life, still labouring under the hardships that were repeatedly laid upon me.\*

Secondly, what I have said in favour of the Protestant religion, cannot be owing to the want of due information. This my adversaries willingly own. And, indeed, I applied as close as any man,

\* The great Erasmus wrote against the errors and corruptions of Popery, and lived and died a Protestant, though he never went through the usual forms of abjuration. The celebrated Pere le C-r-y-r, who was obliged, above thirty years ago, to take refuge in England, for writing in defence of the Protestant religion, especially the English ordination, is a constant churchman, though by what I find, he has not yet gone through the usual forms. Pierce Creagh, Esq. late of the county of Clare, never read his recantation 'till he found himself near his end; then he sent for a clergyman of the established church, and performed the requisites, and assigned such reasons for his past conduct, as are found by experience to operate still upon the minds of many, who cannot bear the brunt of malice on the one hand, or the (very often ill-judged) suspicion of insincerity on the other.

during the time I spent in the University. I have presided in the College, as Lecturer in Philosophy for four years, and for some time in Divinity. I have taken the several degrees of Master and Doctor of Arts, Bachelor and Licentiate of Divinity. I have received a diploma for each of these four degrees. I examined all religions, and had opportunities of reading and hearing enough on both sides of every question, so that as far as regards information, I am well qualified to judge. This makes several of my adversaries say, that it is impossible I could be a true Protestant; whereby they mean, that Popery is the only true religion upon earth, and, that I understand that religion as well as any divine from this to Rome.

There are many good and learned priests in this kingdom, who are convinced of the truth and divine authority of the Protestant religion, but have not courage enough to shake off their fetters and declare themselves. They think, like Nicodemus in the gospel, that they may believe the religion of Jesus Christ in their hearts, and still remain in the exterior profession of a false religion. They are afraid of unsettling themselves, and dread giving offence to their old connexions, and that they may not have wherewithal to relieve their poor relations that are leaning upon them for support, and therefore they temporize through necessity. They are loth to part with the inexhaustible resource of temporal benefit—purgatory.



In a word, as they often declare upon certain occasions, that they do not believe either purgatory or transubstantiation, it is by mere self-interest, mere worldly considerations, that they are withheld from openly professing the Protestant religion.

As to party invectives, they are no reason why any man of sense should delay a moment to espouse openly the interests of religion and truth. The primitive Christians were reviled and persecuted by the Jews and Heathens. St. Paul was called an apostate, a madman, and what not. The Roman converts were often opprobriously treated for apostatizing from the holy, Catholic, ancient, and venerable religion of the Gods, and their superstition (so the heathens affected to call the Christian religion) was traduced as the cause of the decay of the Roman empire.

Although it is remarked that proselytes to all religions are apt to be most bitter against those they have quitted, yet I hope I have not incurred the charge. An ill-natured thing said or done, in cold blood, admits of no excuse. It is not by asperity that truth is to be established, otherwise our Saviour's yoke would not be easy, nor his burden light. No man has a right to treat another ill, on account of his being of a different persuasion; such treatment must be the effect of a degenerate faction, or consummate ignorance. There are people in every religion, eminently conspicuous for learning and virtue. An honest man

is the noblest work of God on earth ; therefore he is to be loved and honoured, whether he be a Christian, Turk, Jew, or Heathen. Who is there so devoid of virtuous feelings, as not to love and admire the character of that generous Muhammedan, Topal Osman, upon reading certain instances that are recorded of his noble spirit and singular gratitude ? \*

\* Topal Osman at the age of twenty-five happened to be sent with the Sultan's order to the Basha of Grand Cairo. His ship was attacked in her passage by a Spanish privateer of superior force. Here he gave the first proofs of that intrepidity by which he often signalized himself afterwards : But at length after an obstinate contest, wherein he was dangerously wounded, Osman was obliged to yield.—The privateer put into Malta with her prize ; and the commander of the port went on board. This was Vincent Arnaud, a native of Marseilles ; to whom Osman, still intent upon the orders he had been intrusted with, addressed himself in the following terms ;—“ Can you do a generous action ? ransom me, and take my word, you shall lose nothing by it.”—Such a request from a slave in his chains is not common ; but there was something in the manner in which it was delivered that struck the Frenchman so much, that although the captain of the privateer rated his ransom at one thousand sequins, about five-hundred pounds English, it was generously complied with. After taking all proper care of his wounds, Arnaud, upon his further request, lent him a vessel of his own, in which Osman, in a short time arrived at Cairo, and delivered the orders he had been charged with to the Basha. From thence he sent back the vessel, together with the ransom ; and five-hundred crowns more, along with some rich furs, as a present to his benefactor : Then setting out for Constantinople, he was himself the first who brought the news of his slavery.

Osman did not cease, during the whole course of his life, to testify this gratitude for the favours that had been done to him — His courage and conduct having raised him to the post of Seraskier, or general in chief, in the Morea, he lost no time to acquaint Vincent Arnaud therewith : sent for his son, made him large presents, and by privileges in point of trade, soon put him in a way of acquiring a good estate. He even distinguished all the French who traded to the Morea, by particular marks of kindness and protection. His abilities advanced him in a few years more, to the dignity of Beglerbeg or chief governor of

That man must be very narrow minded, very ignorant of human nature, and but little the better of his studies and his correspondence with mankind, whose temper is not thereby softened to a benevolence for the good and virtuous of all parties ; *ruat Cælum et fiat justitia.*

Now, though I have said nothing in this work that has not been said by others before me, yet

Romania. Upon which he again sent for Arnaud and his son—treated them with such marks of distinction, as are there, hardly ever shown to a christian, and loaded them with presents.

At length, in 1731, he was called to the highest dignity in the Ottoman empire, being made Grand-Vizier ; upon which, he immediately sent again to Malta for his old benefactor. When Arnaud and his son arrived at Constantinople, they were received by the Grand-Vizier, in presence of the great officers of state, with the utmost marks of affection ; before whom, he made a public detail of the favours which this Frenchman had formerly shown him.—“ I was a slave,” cried he, “ loaded with chains, and covered with wounds, this is the man who redeemed and saved me. This is my benefactor. To him I am indebted for life, liberty, fortune, and every thing I enjoy. Without knowing me, he paid a large ransom for me, sent me away upon my bare word, and gave me a ship to carry me where I pleased. Where is even a Mussulman capable of an action of such generosity.” He afterwards conferred with them in private, divested of all state and ceremony, enriched them with presents, and procured them great advantages in point of traffick.

As his gratitude was without bounds, he seemed desirous to convince his benefactor, that his liberality was the same. His conduct was great and noble, and superior to all affectation ; and must appear the more generous upon this occasion, when we consider the contempt and aversion, which the Turks usually entertain against the Christians, and that the foregoing acknowledgement was made before his whole Court.

The author from whom this account is abridged, concludes it with the following observation :—

If this generous Turk said of Vincent Arnaud, “ Where is even the Mussulman who is capable of an action of such generosity.” We may say, “ Where shall we find even a Christian requiting a generous action, in a more noble manner than Topal Osman.” Instances of this kind are but rare ; and therefore, when they happen ought the more to be recorded. *Hanway's Travels.*



there are thousands of the Pope's communion in this kingdom that will say, they never heard any thing of the kind before. They will cry out "That they were bred Heathens unknown to themselves." *Ingemiscet orbis Papalis se esse Paganum.* Let me therefore, O! ye deluded people of Ireland, beg of you for the sake of the living God and our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, to read and consider attentively, what I have here put together for your instruction and benefit. Your eternal as well as temporal, welfare, is concerned in it. It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for you, if after all the pains that have been taken to disabuse you, and to redeem you from the captivity of error and illusion, you will still refuse listening to instruction, and persist in your inveterate prejudices. The plea of prescription is but an equivocal argument in the mouth of any man upon earth. It proves as much for the Heathen and Jew as for the Christian. Nay, it would prove more for the Heathen than for any other; for the Heathen religion has subsisted near, and perhaps a great deal more than four thousand years. It was the most antient, the most Catholic, or universal, and the most visible in our Saviour's days. Nay, the Christian religion was for a long time before it could be called either antient, or Catholic, or visible. So that those pretended notes of the church, at best, prove nothing but by chance, and at second hand.

And as to tradition, it is not much better than a compound of contradictions, divisions and factions. If you tell me you will stick to the religion you were bred and born in, you only say what the old Irish heathens did in St. Patrick's time.

I have sufficiently proved in the course of the following work, that, as Heathenism was only a superstructure of lies and fictions, raised upon the truths that had been revealed to mankind in the first ages of the world, in like manner, Popery is but a superstructure of innovations, fictions and pious frauds, as they are termed, raised upon the fundamental truths of Christianity; and therefore I tell you solemnly, in the presence of God and the universe, as I shall account for it at the divine tribunal, that nobody will ever enter into the kingdom of heaven, in virtue of the popish religion; and that all papists are in the same mass of perdition and eternal damnation with the old heathens, except such as are invincibly ignorant of their errors.\* I make this exception, because

\* The argument drawn by the Romanists from the resolution taken by Harry, king of Navarre, to quit the Protestant religion, where the Popish divines allowed no salvation, and embrace the Popish, where all allowed there was salvation, is inconclusive for two reasons. 1st. Because that king was determined, at all events, to conform to the Popish religion, for the sake of being king of France, and only consulted the divines of both churches for the sake of a plausible pretext; for his usual saying was, *Paris vaut bien une messe*. 2d. Because the answer made by the Popish divines upon that occasion is an argument of imposture; whereas that made by the Protestant divines, is an argument of sincerity and honesty, and a disinterested love of truth. Where self-interestedness appears, there is room to suspect a cheat. An exclusive self-righteousness is an evident mark of imposture.

the redemptive ransom is paid for all mankind, and therefore God requires no more of any man than according to his measure of knowledge ; for in every nation upon earth, in every age, in every religion, “ he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness with an honest mind and a sincere heart, is accepted with him.”\* Charity is the grand characteristic of Christianity. By it mankind might become not only like angels, but like God himself. With it there is salvation, and without it nothing. Let me, therefore, beg of you again to bring your religion to the test. But in order thereunto, you must first divest yourselves of your prejudices, and learn to doubt, otherwise you never will be able to form a right notion of religious matters. It is mere priestcraft to say, that one is never to doubt in matters of faith. This, like shutting up the Scriptures, and forbidding to read Protestant authors, is subdolously suggested, in order to frighten you from examining your religion, lest you might discover the cheat that is put upon you. I have nothing to gain or lose by your conforming to the established religion ; I have nothing in view but the interest of religion and truth. There is nothing to be gained in the Protestant church by pious frauds ; nay, there is nothing that does the Protestant clergy and religion more honour, than the abolishing the traffic of Purgatory, Indulgency, Absolution, &c. as they have thereby testified the same

\* Acts 10. 35.



disinterestedness that the Apostles and primitive Christians did.

How can you pretend to merit any trust or confidence, while you avow the political principles of Popery? What can be more monstrous in nature, than a body with two heads? It is the same in politics. It was not the God of peace and order, but the spirit of confusion, ambition, and tyranny, that first suggested the system of two visible heads, over one and the same community. What can be more dangerous, more subversive of the peace and order of society, than to teach that the supreme visible head in spirituals, is distinct from the supreme visible head in temporals, and that he can depose kings and princes, and absolve subjects from their allegiance? These doctrines are so monstrous, that it is strange how any man, that has the least love for his country, or the peace and union of society, can avow them.

But you will say, perhaps, that you disavow those principles. Pray don't you avow the Pope's supremacy? You certainly do, otherwise you could not be of the communion of the See of Rome; for this supremacy is defined in your church as an article of faith. Bellarmine says, it is the *summa Rei Christianæ*; it is the chief link upon which the Popish chain depends, Now this supremacy includes all the political principles of Popery. Every body knows what the Pope arrogates to himself, under the pretence of being St. Peter's successor, &c.

If you object that the French avow this supremacy, and still disavow those principles, I answer, 1st, that your case is very different from that of the French. You live under a Protestant king and government; and it is well known, that the people of your religion look upon all Protestants as heretics and schismatics, and believe that it is not only lawful, but even meritorious, to extirpate such people from off the face of the earth, with fire and sword, &c. Witness the Inquisition; and it has been remarked, that the Pope used to get *Te Deum* sung in Rome, as often as the Protestants were massacred in France and elsewhere.

I answer, 2d, that the French, by allowing the Pope's supremacy, and disclaiming the political principles of Popery, are guilty of a flat contradiction. They destroy with one hand what they support with the other. They receive no bulls, no decrees or definitions of faith, no laws from the Pope but what they like, what they find consistent with the Gallican liberties. They have more than once declared in their councils, that, if he should attempt to excommunicate them, they would excommunicate him in return: *si excommunicatus venit, excommunicatus abibit*. When Lewis the Twelfth defeated Pope Julius the Second in battle, he called a council in Tuscany, and caused money to be coined and inscribed with these words, *perdam Babylonis nomen*. Does not this shew that the supremacy is a mere chimera among the French? They indeed pay him first fruits, and

the like, but it is only upon a principle of policy, and for the sake of peace and quietness ; for they are labouring these many years past to shake off his yoke, and put themselves upon the same establishment with the Church of England.

What has been laid together in the course of this work, is, I humbly conceive, sufficient to convince every unprejudiced man of the absurdity of Popery. Let me therefore intreat you, once more, to consider the disadvantages it lays you under with regard to eternity as well as time. Shake off the yoke of your inveterate delusion, and return to the religion of Jesus Christ. It is in vain for you to pretend, that a Papist can be sincerely loyal to a Protestant king and government. If you allege any instances to the contrary, I must tell you they were not Papists, though through indolence, pusillanimity, or otherwise, they remained in the exterior profession of Popery. For any man that believes as the Popish religion teaches, must believe that all Protestants are heretics and schismatics ; that no faith is to be kept with them ; and that it is highly meritorious to extirpate all such people out of the world.\* It is throwing dust in people's eyes for a Papist to pretend, until he abjures the Pope's supremacy,

\* Witness the spirit they manifest, when a poor fellow creature is sacrificed on the altar of the Inquisition. According as he roars from amidst the flames, they laugh and hiss, and shout at the heretic ; whereas if he suffered for murder, high treason, or the like, they would sympathize with him in his sufferings.



and the doctrine of absolution, that he could be faithful to a Protestant government. You will say, perhaps, that you abhor the persecuting spirit of Popery. I don't doubt but the rational, well-bred people among you do, especially as you are interested in it yourselves ; for your tempers must have been sweetened by your long intercourse with Protestants. But then who can believe you, while you profess the Popish religion? You must, therefore, solemnly abjure that religion, before you are entitled to any trust or confidence. The predominant and distinguishing character of any religion, is the standard whereby to judge of the spirit of its votaries. The distinguishing character of the Protestant religion is charity to all mankind. That of Popery is arbitrary government, persecution, tyranny and oppression. Accordingly, we have seen the effects of it wherever that system held, or still holds, the reins of government. As the distinguishing characters of the religion of Jesus Christ are meekness, mercy, charity, universal benevolence, &c. you cannot, if you throw off the veil of prejudice, but see it shine in all its majesty in the Church of England. Come then, in the name of Jesus Christ, and let us be of one fold. All that is wanting to make our nation completely brave, prosperous, and glorious is, that old delusions, idolatry, and superstitious practices, should be laid aside, that there might be no more divisions among the natives. Let us all be ani-

mated with a noble, patriotic spirit. Let the public interest preponderate against all private considerations, and let us be united in charity and brotherly love, studying the interest of each other, by promoting the general interest and welfare of our country in the unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and righteousness of life.

It is usual with the Jews to say, that if an angel came from heaven to preach to them, and declare that Jesus Christ was the true Messiahs foretold by the prophets, they would not believe him. Those people are now near 1800 years in this deplorable state of blindness and deception. They are still incredulous, notwithstanding the visible accomplishment of the prophecies relating to the Messiahs, notwithstanding the glorious lights of the Gospel, and the other splendid attestations and motives of credibility, whereby the truth of the christian religion is irrefragably evinced and established, and notwithstanding all the efforts of human learning to disabuse and convince them of their errors. But, what is more astonishing than all is, they think they are right, and have a strong conviction upon their minds of the truth and justice of what they profess, as appears plainly from their unwearied, unexampled patience under an uninterrupted succession of hardships, miseries, persecution and banishment, for the sake of their religion, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem.

Now, as Christ suffered for all men, and as God wills that all those for whom he suffered, should come to the knowledge of the truth of it, and be saved, this infatuation that hangs over the Jews cannot be otherwise accounted for, than by resolving it into the prejudices of education. The Jews have been from their earliest years, trained up to think, that they themselves are the chosen people of God, and his only favourites upon earth; that the Messiahs he promised to send them, is still to come; and, consequently, that all christians are so many liars and impostors, for pretending that he is already come. This is the most natural way of accounting for their blindness and stupidity, as well as antipathy to the rest of mankind.

That this is the greatest and most astonishing instance of infatuation and delusion ever known, must be allowed. The Romanists ought therefore to tremble at the thought of it, as they are taught from their infancy, like those unhappy Jews, to look upon themselves in the light of God's chosen people and only favourites upon earth, to esteem all other christians as heretics and schismatics, and to deny salvation to those not within the pale of their church. And to conclude the Jewish infatuation upon themselves, they say, that if an angel from heaven preached the contrary to them, they would not believe him. But, what ought most of all to make them tremble is, that there is no plea of sincerity and conviction they can make



for themselves, but the Jews will make in their own behalf; nor an instance of stupidity to be found half so great a mystery, as that of the unhappy Jews.

Here is the true source of their insensibility to all arguments and remonstrances, and of their precipitate and violent manner of proceeding against those who lend a hand to tear down the veil that hangs over their eyes. As they never will cease, it seems, to give us repeated instances of it, they have, accordingly, given us a very glaring one of late. No sooner were my proposals for the Popish Mass published, than I was attacked by libellous and scurrilous pamphlets, advertisements, anonymous letters, and other works of darkness, before they knew what I had to say. But, as it is always the fate of error to betray itself, it happened providentially, that all their precipitate steps and premature arguments, serve rather to strengthen and establish, than to weaken the cause I have espoused.

It is a sure sign that a cause is grown desperate, when the advocates for it are obliged to stoop with scavengers in the street, to look for arguments. As this is the case of my adversaries, they may go on with their Billingsgate ribaldry, and scribble and paint me as vile as they please. I shall glory in it the more, and thank God that I have been put upon a level with the primitive christians, who were, for the same cause, reviled

and persecuted by the Jews and heathens. St. Paul was called, 'this pestilent fellow,' 'this apostate,' 'this madman,' and what not. His fellow-christians were called the dregs and sweepings of mankind—a set of ignorants, that had the presumption to condemn doctrines that had been sanctioned by all that was learned and great, and powerful upon earth; and it is well known, that true believers have been treated in the same manner ever since. The Protestants of France are a signal instance of it. For, as often as they presented any petitions for redress of grievances, the cardinals, &c. used to cry out, "How dare such a rabble mix with nobility, or lift up their heads at an august assembly?"

In a pamphlet lately published, entitled, "An Antidote against the Reveries of the Popish Mass," I am introduced as another Goliath, challenging the people of Israel, the Papists; styled 'an actor,' 'an impostor,' 'a deist,' any thing but a Protestant. This author's virulent rant, must therefore be looked upon as an effect of impotent malice and vengeance to sacrifice me, if he could, with his tongue, as he cannot with his hand.

He says I am "an impostor," or else that I was "guilty of levity and imbecility of mind, in the change I have made." Therefore, St. Paul was an impostor on some side, or else he was guilty of levity, &c. But he says, "the conversion of St. Paul, and the rest of the primitive christians,

was grounded upon miracles and other motives of credibility which I had not. Therefore, my conversion is the more to be admired, as it is not the effect of extraordinary means. But, in good earnest, are there no motives of credibility now to ground the christian faith upon? If there be not, then there is not a christian to be found upon the globe. But if there be, why then could not I be influenced by such motives as well as any other?

He says 'If God *alone* can forgive sins, then it would follow that the church has no such power.' If the power of forgiving sins be a prerogative of the Deity, certainly it cannot be exercised by any created being, but in an instrumental and ministerial way. But that is not sufficient for this author. The church must share in the Divine prerogative, as the old heathen emperors shared in the administration of the universe. *Dimidium imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet.*

He says 'the Church of England, by keeping holy days in honour of saints and angels, is as guilty of heathenism as the Church of Rome.' But pray do we teach or allow to invoke them? Do we distinguish between a relative and absolute worship? Do we order the worship of hyperdulia for the Virgin Mary, and of dulia for the other saints? Do we allow they know the secrets of hearts? Do we allow any mediator between God and man but Jesus Christ? Do we damn as heretics to eternity, all those who should believe otherwise



than as we do? We only thank God for the succours he affords us by the ministry of angels, and beg of him to grant us grace to follow the saints in all virtuous and godly living. If the Romanists did no more, we should never charge them with errors on that head.

He says 'we have churches dedicated to, and called by the names of Peter, Paul, Mary,' &c. But pray, who dedicated those churches to such or such saints? Who was it that first called them by those names? Certainly they were not Protestants. No Protestant bishop ever yet dedicated a church to any angel or saint. We found them so, and so we left them. If the Church of Rome had preserved the heathen temples, even under the names they were distinguished by before, but discarded all the idolatrous and superstitious worship there practised, we would never accuse her of idolatry or superstition on that score. But what makes her guilty of both, is, that she has preserved and adopted those temples with all their superstitious worship. He says 'it would follow from the conformity of Popery with Paganism, that Austin, the monk, converted the English Saxons from heathenism to heathenism.' But this is no paradox. Are not there several modes of worship among christians? And cannot a man be converted from one mode of them to another? Yes certainly, for we have instances of it every day. Where then is the inconsistency that there should be different

modes and species of heathenism? As heathenism was a superstructure of lies, fictions and corruptions, raised upon the foundation of the religion of Noah, so Popery is a superstructure of the Heathen fictions, corruptions, and impostures, raised upon the foundation of the religion of Jesus Christ; and, therefore, as it is, a new form, a new mode of heathenism, it is no way strange that heathens might be converted from heathenism to heathenism.

He says 'the Popish Mass cannot be originally an heathen rite, otherwise the epistles and gospels would be of heathen origin likewise.' But I say if this were enough to vindicate the Mass, from being an heathen rite, it would follow, that the heathen religion was the religion of Noah and the rest of the patriarchs, as there were several of the original truths mixed with the heathen superstitions. But, as calling the days of the week by the names of heathen gods and goddesses, does not alter their nature from what it was before, so adding the epistles, &c. to the ceremony of the Mass, and calling it by the name of a christian sacrifice, does not alter it from, what it was before, a mere heathen rite, the very unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine that was celebrated, and so called in Rome, for above seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, as we shall see more at large farther on.

But, as the identity of the Popish Mass with Numa Pompilius's unbloody sacrifice of bread and

wine, has galled my adversaries, so far as to make them say, that 'such a title and original never entered into any but a delirious brain,' I shall, when I come to the article, by and by, add more upon it, for the satisfaction of my readers, and to guard them against the sophistry of those enemies of the Gospel-truth and purity. In the mean time, I must take notice of this author's last effort to support an expiring cause. He says Pope of England is my Alexander and my Pope, because I do not allow people to turn religion into a system of magic. But why all this rage and fury against moral honesty? Does not our Saviour say, that the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath? Was not religion, therefore, made for man, not man for religion? Was it not instituted to unite us to each other in social love and mutual benevolence? Or, was it originally designed as a leaven to work us up to wild fury and enthusiastic animosity towards each other—to teach us to murder, massacre, burn and destroy? If the Papists were for hiring or retaining any one, would they not prefer an honest Turk, Jew or Heathen, before a rogue and a villian of their own religion? And why don't they allow this preference in theory? What is faith and all the religion in the world, without good works or moral honesty? They own that every single action of our Saviour's, was of infinite value, and, consequently, sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world. What occasion then for



all that he did in this life, if it was not to teach us to live sociably and honestly together? Was not this the immediate object, (there is no doubt but the salvation of mankind was the remote and ultimate object) was not this, I say, the immediate object of his mission? Is a believing rogue saved by virtue of his faith, and a negative infidel damned, though he co-operates with whatever lights he is possessed of, and does not believe, because he had no opportunity of instruction? Yes it seems, for if a man believes whatever they please to tell him, they can supply his want of moral honesty, by the magic virtue of masses and sacraments. The ceremonial and sacramental part of religion is, according to them, the quintessence of it. 'Our Saviour,' says this author, (page 59) 'left us a revealed religion, whereby the fruit and benefit of his Passion might be applied to us.' 'This is,' says he, 'a great deal more than making loyal subjects and good citizens.' Here lies the grand secret of Popish priest-craft. No loyalty, no honesty, no rectitude of life will do, unless we allow that the benefits of Christ's passion can be applied to us by masses, absolutions, indulgences, and such other magic rites. This is the chief thing in religion, according to them, because it is by this craft they get their wealth; and this is the cause why so many deluded christians spend their days in vice and wickedness, in hopes of having all their wounds healed at once, at

the hour of death, without being put to any farther trouble than to pay for a Popish nostrum.

Here I dismiss this author,\* and advise him to keep his sophistry for his own flock, who, though bred in the dark, had light enough to see, that a tomb-stone, which he had prepared for perpetu-

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\* This Author's arguments upon image-worship are so silly, that any reader may, by what I have already said, easily see the absurdity of them. He says, 'my parallel is scandalous, as it would unchurch the churches of Great Britain, &c. for 900 years and afterwards before the Reformation, and bring the great and venerable body of Roman Catholics under the guilt of idolatry for so many ages,' &c. Therefore, first, the old Greeks and Romans were no idolaters, as they were the most learned, the most victorious, and the most venerable body of men upon earth. Therefore, second, our Saviour, St. Paul, and St. John, were guilty of falsehood and scandal in foretelling that the bulk of Christendom would relapse into idolatry, and remain so for many ages. Our Saviour says, that in the time of Antichrist, the very elect, (who, as they are allowed by all christians to be but few, cannot be either Catholics or Roman Catholics, in the Popish sense of the word catholic,) would, if it were possible, be seduced by miracles and wonders, and the specious appearance of truth. According to St. Paul, the Man of Sin, or Antichrist, (that is, a succession of men acting in that character) was to sit in the Temple of God or church of Christ, commanding and forbidding the very things that are now commanded and forbidden by the Pope and church of Rome. And, according to St. John, his persecuting bloody reign was to hold 1260 years.

Let the reader reconcile the following contradictions if he can. The author says, 'the title of my work is an original that was never hatched in any brain but my own,' and yet he says, 'I stole it from gentlemen that were not so stupid as to expose themselves in print.' He says, 'I looked upon the Mass to be a sacred liturgy and a holy sacrifice, while I was saying Mass; and yet,' he says, 'I said Mass in the morning with a pharisaical gravity, and in the evening condemned it as rank idolatry, and still that I was all along persecuted by the titular b——p for Deism.' Surely no Deist ever yet allowed the Mass to be a holy sacrifice. He says again, that 'I appealed to the Pope in order to keep my ground,' and yet he owned, that 'if I would submit

ating his name to posterity, would be a blot on the rolls of monumental fame, and, therefore, knocked it to pieces ; whereupon he got a second, and set his thunders to guard it in the following manner :  
 “ If any of you, you *Canaille Chretienne*, dare touch my stones any more, I will, as I do hereby curse,

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to the b——p, I could have kept my parishes.’ The same b——p told the Protestants of the town I live in, that if I made him any kind of submission, I might have continued as I was. I have witnesses to prove, that as I was on my journey going to read my recantation, some priests came to me in behalf of the titular b——p, and begged of me on their knees to return home and that I should have what terms I pleased. My appeal was for an affair of greater consequence to religion than the interest of parishes. I wanted to have the doctrines, for which I was traduced and persecuted as an heretic, brought to a fair trial. Accordingly, I obtained an order for a set of learned men to meet upon it. But they all refused it for fear, if they approved of my doctrines that they would be censured by the court of Rome ; and, if they condemned my doctrines, that they might be persecuted by the Protestants. I am not the first Protestant that appealed in this manner. The Jansenists of France are Protestants, and, yet, they often appealed to Popes and future general councils. Several Protestants, in the beginning of the Reformation, appealed to a future general council. But, when they found that the Holy Ghost was sent in a bag once a week from Rome to Trent, they saw it was in vain for them to expect justice from any tribunal under the Pope’s influence. Among the many methods, that were taken by the court of Rome to baffle the cause of the Jansenists there was one, which by the by, proves the conformity of Popery with Paganism. The responses of the old heathen oracles were delivered in such an equivocal, ambiguous, general, and obscure manner, as to answer any, even opposite turns, purposes and events. The responses from Rome were delivered in the same manner, and even, sometimes, without a single stop or comma, though otherwise diffusive enough to admit of hundreds of stops. My dispute was a doctrinal affair ; and this is so true, that the titular b——p said, if I continued much longer, in the parishes I had, I would have made Protestants of all the inhabitants. Nay, he told me in the course of the dispute, that I only wanted a plausible pretence for reading my recantation.



damn, nauseate, and puke you out of my mouth and out of the mouth of the church."

As to the other letter addressed to me, I may say that a more mortal stroke could not, in so small a compass, be given to the cause of Popery. This letter writer says, in an ironical, manner, that 'the Popish clergy are alarmed at the appearance of the title of my work; that they tremble—look pale—and expect nothing less than the final dissolution of their old church-system.' Now, what if it appears that there is more than an irony in those alarms? When my proposals for the Popish Mass were first posted up, there was such lamentations that one might have thought it was some comet that appeared portending the destruction of nations. In the libels that were composed for me, I was represented as a second Luther, born to extinguish the Popish religion in Ireland. The opinion among the common people was, that the Day of Judgment was at hand; for that, according to an old prophecy, the great revolution of all nature should be announced to the world by a minister, travelling in his gown and band from one country to another. Preachers have been employed by the t——r b——p here, to declaim against my Popish Mass, and to caution the people 'to beware of the learned doctors,' for so they expressed it, 'that have sprung up among them of late.' According to those preachers, 'Luther and Calvin are risen from the dead, the Empress Queen of Heaven



and Earth and Mother of God, is angry with me for attacking the Holy Mass, and all such as follow me to Church, will be haunted by evil spirits, or struck dead by a thunder clap, or die a sudden and unprovided death !' Orders are given, it seems, to all the priests in the diocese to raise their trumpet against me. But what surprises me most of all is, to hear that M——l R——n, P. P. of M—ck—ky, near Thurles, a man otherwise of good understanding, though he opposed me some years ago upon the subject of Saving Faith and Universal Charity, has, some Sundays past, vehemently inveighed from his altar against my Popish Mass. The cause of my surprise is this :—one day as that gentleman and I, when we lived in Paris, went together into the country, to say Mass in a village near the Bois de Boulogne, we happened to dispute about the doctrine of Transubstantiation ; and, from the arguments I made use of, he seemed so struck, that he suddenly broke off and cried out, that ' the Fathers of Trent did not know what they were saying when they established such doctrine.'

The letter-writer says, ' the title of my work is a mystery unintelligible to human understanding : impenetrable to the common sense of mankind. An absolute impossibility, of which human reason cannot possibly conceive an idea,' &c. Be astonish-

ed, O ye heavens, at this ! A notorious prostitute who has spent her days in open rebellion against virtue, has the effrontery to offer to appeal to this same virtue, for the regularity and propriety of her conduct ! Who can, without the highest indignation, bear to hear those retailers of the contradictions and impossibilités of Transubstantiation, those enemies of human reason and common sense, appeal to this same reason and common sense ? Those who have thrown such impenetrable mists over the pure religion of the Gospel, and turned it in a chaos of absurdities, tell me that I have diffused an awful and mystical fog over the matter in question ? On the contrary, I will prove that I have removed the veil they have thrown over it, and that I have given it such a luminous appearance as will enable an illiterate heathen, or papist, to conceive an idea of it. In the mean time, I must tell them that if, instead of the grains of incense they present me with, in empty bombast and pedantry, they had but one grain of common sense, they could not but perceive that, by this Jewish sneering and sophistry, they prove themselves as obstinate, as perverse and as blind as the Jews themselves. God has, it seems, hardened the heart of Pharaoh. He has given those people over to the corruptions of their own hearts, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Well then might St. Paul have foretold,

that those followers of Antichrist\* would have their consciences seared with a hot iron.

Before I show that an illiterate Papist, or an illiterate Heathen, can conceive an idea of the identity of the Popish Mass with Numa Pompilius's unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine, I shall add here, to what I have already said, that their chicane upon the Epistles and Gospels, &c. is ridiculous. They say, that the Mass is a sacrifice. Now, according to all the Popish authors I ever read, this sacrifice does not begin before the Canon; nay, several of them hold that it does not begin before the Consecration: but all say that the Epistles &c. are only a preparation to it. Now as by the Popish Mass is understood, that sacrifice which is celebrated by a Popish priest at his altar, and, as it shall hereafter appear, that this very sacrifice was celebrated by heathen priests for several ages before the birth of Christ; I ask, whether pronouncing the name of Jesus, or any other word, can sanctify a heathen rite? If it can, then the primitive bishops were a set of cruel, merciless tyrants, for having persecuted and punished

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\* What can be more romantic than the following notion which prevails among the common people, viz.—That Antichrist is to appear in the form of a monstrous giant with only one eye, and that in the middle of his forehead—that he is to set the world on fire with his breath—that Ireland, with its inhabitants, will sink under the sea, and there remain safe and sound under the protection of St. Patrick—that when the conflagration is over, they will all emerge out of the waters, and continue to flourish and prosper for a thousand years!



the christians, that offered incense to idols, before they knew or inquired whether those christians had pronounced the name of Jesus, or any other christian word even once. Therefore, likewise, those missionaries, who condemned the Jesuits for authorising the Chinese christians to worship the idol of Confucius, were a factious, malicious set ; as they did not know but those christians had pronounced some word or other once, whereby that act of worship might have been sanctified.— But if one word cannot sanctify a heathen ceremony, then it is evident that two words cannot do it, because the difference between the two numbers is only one. Then it is plain, that no number whatsoever can do it, because the difference between the number that could not sanctify, and the number that could, in the supposition, would be only one still. Therefore, if the whole Scripture was thrust into an heathen ceremony, it could not sanctify it. Besides, the Papists themselves own, if the doctrine of Transubstantiation were false, that the Popish Mass would be a diabolical imposture, notwithstanding all the epistles and gospels, &c.

It is certain, that the heathens offered their sacrifices for the living and the dead, that they had an unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine, so called and celebrated in Rome and several other places.—that the pontifical and sacerdotal ornaments used in the Church of Rome at present, were in use among the old heathens, that the heathen priests



wore the tonsure, i. e. the crown of the head shaved—that the congregation were sprinkled with holy-water before and after the sacrifice—that the priest washed his hands before he vested himself—that having put on an amict, an alb, or long shirt, a cincture, a stole, chasuble, &c. he went to his altar (which was always at the east-end of the temple where there was but one) and there repeated a long string of gods, and goddesses to whom he made a general confession of his sins---that having performed several prayers and rounds at the altar, with one or both hands always applied to his mouth as often as he turned about to the congregation, he proceeded to offer his unbloody sacrifice, consisting of a round thin wafer or cake and a cup of wine—that when the sacrifice was consummated, he dismissed the congregation with these words: *Ite missio est.* All this shall be proved in due time from popish and pagan authors. Now, if an illiterate Papist, who had not heard that such a ceremonial as this was ever practised among the heathens, went into a heathen temple, where Numa Pompilius's ritual was observed, and saw a priest celebrate the sacrifice of bread and wine, would not he suspect that the place he was in was a Popish Church, or else, that a priest of his religion had obtained leave from the heathens to say Mass in their temple? Would not he be confirmed in his suspicion if he saw a heathen pontiff come into the temple dressed in his

pontifical robes, with a mitre on his head, a crosier in his hand, a ring on his finger, &c. ? If on the other hand, an illiterate Heathen, who had seen the sacrifice of bread and wine celebrated according to Pompilius's ritual, but never heard any thing of this conformity, went into a church in a Popish country and saw a Popish priest celebrate his sacrifice, and a bishop come into the church, in his pontificals, would not he think respectively as the Papist did ? Would not each of them conceive an idea of the identity of the Popish sacrifice with the Heathen ?

But says the letter-writer, 'The Popish Mass is the unbloody oblation of the body and blood of Christ ; therefore, it could not have been celebrated by heathen priests : otherwise Christ would have been offered up in sacrifice before he was born.' Here he and his party are guilty of the fallacy called *petitio principii*, begging the thing in question, as much as if they had said : *Gentlemen of the Protestant religion, and all others upon the globe, give us leave to call the Popish Mass the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, otherwise we must allow it to be no more than a mere Heathen rite.* They know that no religion, or sect will allow that their Mass is the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, or that there is any thing sacrificed by a Popish priest at his altar but bread and wine. But, say they, 'this is the acceptance of the Popish Mass.' Pray, where is this acceptance founded ? Certainly it is only in the

brains of Papists. The acceptation of it, among Protestants and all other people in the world, is that it is no more than Numa Pompilius's unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine. They have the authority of history, the evidence of sense, and the mathematical demonstration for their meaning of the Popish Mass ; but the Papists have neither for theirs. If one should put the word, idolatrous, superstitious, wicked, or the like, into the acceptation or description of the Popish Mass ; would not the Papists say, that, that was a tack of his own? By the same rule he might tell them that, when they put the words, body and blood of Christ, into the acceptation, or description of it, it is only a tack of *their* own. To decide the dispute between them, the affair must be referred to what falls under the cognizance of the senses ; and then it will be evident to demonstration that the Popish Mass has been celebrated by heathen priests for several ages before the birth of Christ.\*

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\* What this letter-writer says of the English liturgy, viz.—‘ That it was formed from the old Romish’ is absolutely false like the rest, as will appear from the following instance. Suppose a man, bred and born in the Heathen religion, should find out in process of time, that his religion was idolatrous and superstitious, but still that many of the truths of the religion of Noah were intermixed with it, which he collects and unites to what, or part of what he finds upon record of the old religion. I ask, whether this collection could be said to be formed from the heathen religion? No certainly, it is even so with the English liturgy. Part of it is taken from the Scripture, and the rest was found to have been in use among the primitive Christians, but scattered up and down and stified in the rubbish of Popery. It is likewise so with our form of ordination. Whoever does not view Protestancy and Popery in this light, will never see either in their native light.



Hence, it is apparent, that nothing can be more disengenuous than the queries that are put to my Doctorship : they never disputed my right to the title of Doctor, until I became a Protestant. But now, as they cannot dispute my life with me, they would, if they thought I had lost my diploma's and letters of orders, deny that I had ever taken a degree, or even that I had ever been ordained a Priest.

I shall, for the reader's satisfaction, add to this postscript, a copy of the diploma upon which I found my rite to the title of doctor. In the mean time, I shall give him an idea of the degrees taken in the faculty of divinity in Paris. After taking the batchelor's degree; a man must wait two years, and sometimes three, before he can enter upon the course called the licence or licentiate, which is a course of probation that holds constantly going for two years. Then, if the graduate has a mind to qualify himself for benefiting of the emoluments of the faculty, he must pay down a certain sum of money, and undergo a short ceremony that is called taking the cap. But, as the whole merit of theological degrees consists in taking the degree of licence, the graduate has a right to the title of Doctor ever after, though he has not a right to any benefit in the faculty by it. Now, as a graduate should remain in or near Paris in order to be entitled to any benefit in the faculty; and as Irish Priests are liable to be commanded home by their bishops, it is rare, that any of them take the cap, and still their title of doctor is never disputed with



them till they become Protestants. But then Juno must be invoked to wreak all her envy, malice, fury, and vengeance upon their heads. *Flectere si nequeunt Superos Acheronta movebunt.*

As to Dr. Middleton's work, I solemnly declare I never yet saw it. And even if I had, I own I would have borrowed as many helps from him as I wanted, nor would I thank any man for it, as I wrote in order to strengthen my brethren, and to open the eyes of those who are blinded by the artifice and sophistry of selfish and crafty men.\* Nay, if I had copied out Dr. Middleton's or any other's parallel, it would still be of general use, as thousands might see it through my means that would never perhaps have otherwise heard of it at all. It is impossible for any man to write upon a subject of

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\* One remarkable instance of Popish artifice I shall beg leave to give here which was this:—at the time that Pope Paul the fifth, had laid the Venetians under an interdict, and when that state was upon the point of separating from the church of Rome, the Jesuit Caraffa printed at Venice some theses in philosophy, with this inscription: PAULO V. VICE-DEO *Christianæ Reipublicæ Monarchæ invictissimo, & Pontificæ Omnipotentie conservatori acerrimo*—"To Paul the fifth, the Vice-God, the most invincible Monarch of the Christian Commonwealth, and most zealous asserter of the Papal Omnipotency." It was observed by bishop Bedell then at Venice, that the numeral letters of the first words PAULO V. VICE-DEO made exactly 666, the number of the beast in the Revelation. This mark of the Pope's being Antichrist, flew over Italy; but lest it should take too much among the people, the Pope caused it to be given out, that Antichrist was at that very time, born in Babylon of the tribe of Dan, and was coming with a vast army to subdue Christendom; wherefore all christian princes should be warned to prepare themselves for resisting so great an invasion. This was so confidently asserted, that it stifled all the effects which were dreaded from the foregoing observation.

[See Bishop Burnet's *Life of Bedell.*]

this kind, without compilation, as it is impossible to make out the argument without the help of historical authority. But what are all those cavils to the matter in question, or how is religion concerned in those recriminations? Surely, truth is truth still, whether a man hears it from another or discovers it himself.

THE FOLLOWING IS A COPY OF MY DIPLOMA FOR  
THE DEGREE OF LICENSE.

UNIVERSIS præsentis literas inspecturis Decanus et Facultas Sacræ Theologiæ Venerabilis Studii Parisiensis salutem in eo qui est omnium Vera Salus. Cum universi fidei Catholicæ Cultores tam naturali æquitate quam divinæ legis præcepto sint adstricti ut fidele testimonium perhibeant veritati: multo magis convenit ut Magistri Sacræ Theologiæ Professores, qui veritatem de divinis Scrutantur & in eà alios instruunt & informant, ut sic nec amore vel favore aut alià quacunque occasione deviant a rectitudine veritatis aut rationis. Cum igitur non solum famâ referente, sed ipsius rei evidentia declarante, veraciter nobis constet dilectum nostrum venerabilem virum & discretum Magistrum ANDREAM MEAGHER Presbyterum Casseliensem in Hiberniâ vitâ Moribus, & Scientiâ fore multipliciter commendabilem; volentes quantum nobis incumbit hæc in parte veritati testimonium perhibere: tenore præsentium notum facimus tam præsentibus quam futuris quod præfatus Magister ANDREAS MEAGHER Presbyter Casseliensis in Hiberniâ Licentiatus gradum in nostrâ Facultate præviis examinibus rigorosis secundum ejusdem nostræ Facultatis statuta & consuetudines, diligenter præhabitis, solemnitatibus in talibus assuetis, laudabiliter & honorifice est adeptus die 14 Mensis Februarii, anno Domini 1752. In cujus rei testimonium sigillum nostrum præsentibus literis duximus apponendum. Datum Parisiis in nostrâ Congregatione generali apud Collegium Sorbonæ Solemniter celebratâ anno Domini 1752 die primâ Mensis Martii. De Mandato D. D. Decani & Magistrorum præfatæ Facultatis Sacræ Theologiæ Parisiensis.

HERISSANT SCRIBA.

THE  
POPISH MASS,

&c.

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*But they had heard only that He which persecuted us in time past, now preacheth the Faith which once he destroyed; and they glorified God in me.*

GALAT, 1. 23, 24.

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HE that will not allow a man to entertain some measure of bias in favor of the opinions he has received from education, must be a stranger to the distinguishing character of the human mind. To act without principle, is to act out of the sphere of reason. Those early prejudices then, being so many principles of conscience and duty, cannot be renounced by any honest man, without a rational evidence and conviction of its being his duty so to do.

But such is our unhappy condition since the fall of our first parents, that those things which were originally ordained for the honor of our nature and the happiness of our being, very often, by a strange fatality, prove the destruction of both. That, zeal arising from the prejudices of education, has often filled the world with scenes of confusion and desolation, we know by the experience of past ages;



but that a man could be so blinded by those early prejudices, in favor of a false religion, as to think in conscience that he acts meritoriously and doeth God service, even when he commits flagrant acts of cruelty and persecution in support of it, is a thing, that we should not perhaps ever believe, if we had not the authority of the Divine Scriptures for it. St. Paul is a sufficient instance of it,—he says of himself, “Ye have heard of my conversation in times past, in the Jew’s religion; how that, beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jew’s religion above many of mine equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” And in the third chapter of his epistle to the Philippians, he says, “he was bred a pharisee; and that if any man thinketh that he hath confidence, whereof he might trust in the flesh, he had more himself: and that he was blameless as touching the righteousness which is in the law.” Hence it is plain that St. Paul acted according to conscience when he persecuted the Christians; and that he thereby fulfilled what our Saviour hath foretold,—John 16, “the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.” Upon the whole then it is obvious, that the prejudices of education, however honest and commendable they might have been in their source, do very often lead people into fatal errors; and, consequently, that every man is bound, at the peril of his eternal salvation, to inquire into their merit and reasonableness, in order to be able to give a rational account of the faith that is in him.

That the prejudices of education are productive of strange effects, I myself can in a great measure testify by my own experience. I was once so prepossessed in favor of the doctrines of Popery, that I



wondered how any reasonable man could believe otherwise. Nay, I thought there was no possibility of salvation out of the pale of the church of Rome; and that, if ever I arrived to a certain degree of learning I could challenge all the Protestants in Europe. But it happened, by God's blessing, that those prejudices did not gain such strength and tenacity as to prevent a free inquiry, and blind my mind for ever to truth and the nature of things. For, in some time after I went to the University, I suspected the orthodoxy of my notions; and, accordingly, I learned, the first step to all true learning—to *doubt*. I discovered, at last, that when I went into the sanctuary, I ought not to leave my reason at the door; that if I did not believe reason, I could believe nothing: that the voice of nature is the voice of God; that reason was the first channel of communication between God and man; and, therefore, that it was the first rule of judgment and conduct prescribed to him by the Creator.

Upon further inquiry I found, that as no degree of perfection or happiness could be added to the infinitude of the Deity, the happiness of rational creatures must have been the end of creation; and, therefore, that, man must be the centre of all the works of God on earth. I found that happiness must be the fruit of religion, as religion is the result of gratitude, and gratitude of reason; hence I inferred the necessity of natural religion. I found that as man was created with free will, he must have been created for labour and exercise,\* that, therefore, he was, in his original state, placed as it were, in an equipoise between good and evil; that by seeking for happiness without the prescribed labour and industry, he subverted the order of his destination; that thus he fell from his original state

\* Gen. 2. 15.

and thus intailed disorder on his posterity. I found that the primitive order could not be regained without supernatural assistance : hence I inferred the necessity of supernatural or revealed religion. I found that this religion could not be of greater infallibility or certainty than the former, as it is the same God that speaks to us by both. In fine, I found that the uniform, constant, and concurrent testimony of our reason and senses is the testimony of God himself ; and, therefore, that this concurrent testimony or evidence, is by divine institution, our standard of judgment in all matters whatsoever : and that to resist such an evidence is, what our Saviour calls “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.” \*

When I thought to follow this clue, through the maze of school-divinity, I was told that our reason is not to be depended upon ; that Scripture is but a dead letter, imperfect, and insufficient ; that the insufficiency of it must be supplied by what they call tradition, and that the only judge of the true sense of either, and of all controversies in matters of religion is a living authority, to which I should pay an absolute and implicit obedience. But then I found them divided about the seat or subject of this pretended infallible authority ; for some held it was the Pope alone ; others, a general Council alone ; others, the Pope and Council together ; others, neither nor both without the subsequent accession and ratification of the Universal Church.

As the rule of faith, appointed by the divine Founder of our religion, was directed by infinite wisdom, it must be commensurate with the several purposes of the incarnation, viz. the temporal as well as eternal happiness of mankind ; therefore, it must be level to the capacity of all, the ignorant

as well as the learned, as far as is necessary to these purposes. I could not find this proportion either in tradition or in any of the above modes of authority. As to tradition, I found, I should not be sure of the sense of it without first discovering the point wherein the fathers, at least the most part of them, unanimously agree; but, in order to this, I should not only know how many fathers there have been in all, but also I should peruse all their works, and be sure of the genuine meaning of every clause, as well as of the authenticity of their writings: I should compare them all with each other, and weigh them in the scale of the nicest criticism to find out the point of concurrence. Now this is a task that no man upon earth is equal to.\*—What then should mankind do? Surely they are not obliged to impossibilities? Hence it appeared evident that tradition is not a part of the rule of faith that Christ has established in his Church†.

Moreover, when those fathers attacked any sect or opinion, they generally ran into the opposite extreme. This is illustrated by Pope Gregory the first,

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\* There is no room here for cavil because, 1st. What the holy pen-men have delivered by word of mouth was, by divine inspiration, committed to writing in order to obviate the innumerable inconveniencies of tradition, as people must, without a written rule, be for ever tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. 2d. We are sure, and it is agreed upon, on all sides, that every assertion of Scripture is true whether we understand it or not. But on the other hand we are sure, and it is likewise confessed, that there are several false doctrines in the writings of the fathers; for which reason the advocates for tradition acknowledge that their testimony establishes no point of doctrine, except where, at least, the greater number of them have concurred.

† The fate of religion among the descendants of Noah, plainly demonstrates that nothing can be more uncertain than the rule of tradition; and that Antichrist, or the Devil himself could not take a more effectual method to deceive and bewilder the sons of men, as it was through that channel that all innovations and corruptions have been conveyed to all the nations of the earth.



by a plant that grows awry, which must be bent to the opposite extreme before it can be brought to an upright direction. How then could we depend upon any thing they said ? Or if we were to lay any stress upon their documents, we should take them at an average, and strike out a proportional mean between those several extremes. But this would be resolving all at last into our own private judgment, as our rule of faith. This would be looking for a rule of faith abroad, where, after all a man's travels and labours, he should find that he had it at home.

I found I should likewise be obliged, to take endless pains to discover the meaning and unanimous consent of popes, councils, &c. and make them agree among themselves before they and I could agree. I should know their several connexions, interests, motives, views, &c. before I could be sure they acted canonically. I should, in fine, travel or write for information throughout all Christendom, to find out how many bishops there were. I should then know, whether each in particular understood the question in dispute, and pronounced upon it without partiality or prejudice. But as all these things are so many personal facts, I could never be certain about them without a special revelation, or as many miracles, as points to be cleared up. And this our adversaries must own, as they acknowledge that there is no infallibility upon earth in respect of *personal* facts. But, as to their pretended infallibility in *doctrinal* facts, whatever the ignorant may think of it, it is but mere cant among the learned ; a bugbear that those in power make use of, to frighten inferiors into a blind obedience ; for, of all the parties that were condemned by popes or councils, there were but very few that ever submitted. And, with regard to those few, let it be considered, that when there was no land of liberty for such people to take



sanctuary in, such pretended submissions must have been owing to the terrors of persecution, as happened in the case of Berengarius or to the apprehensions of beggary and want. As they never yet could settle this matter, so as to reconcile all parties, nor even dare go about it with an *anathema*, for fear of losing half, if not the most part of their church ; or for fear of laying themselves open to the people they call heretics ; it is a plain demonstration that they neither have, nor seriously believe they have, any such thing among them. Though all parties, to save appearances, do, in the heat of dispute, pretend to appeal to pope or council, yet the party condemned will always think the other in the wrong. And this has been the case since the first ages of the church. What became of this infallibility when St. Cyprian, and thousands of others stood out against popes and councils, 'till the day of their deaths ; when popes condemned popes, and councils condemned councils, and rescinded each others decrees ? Does not this show that, in their hearts, they look upon it to be no more than a chimera ?

And, indeed, it was not possible for Christ to establish such an infallible authority upon earth, with an injunction to submit to it in the absolute and implicit sense of our adversaries. For, the Creator has, for the good of the universe and the glory of his providence, endued us from the beginning with liberty and free agency ; therefore the administration of the world must, in all respects, be consistent therewith. As the infinitely wise and good God, who always had the same regard for the souls of men that he has now or ever will, has, notwithstanding, suffered the truths, which he himself had originally delivered to mankind, to be in some years after the flood, disfigured by the gross and abominable errors of idolatry and superstition, he has

likewise suffered the covenant, sealed with the blood of Christ, to be defaced by endless corruptions. Nor could he totally prevent it without acting inconsistently with his plan of creation. For, if he had acted upon a plan that would adequately express his infinite power, we should not understand the order, the economy, or the wisdom of his operations. But as he condescended, in the work of creation, to our limited, but free capacities for our instruction and benefit, he has likewise condescended to the same in the work of redemption. Hence this pretended infallibility would be a plain contradiction in the present system of things; consequently, there is no other judge of controversies but the light of reason; and this our adversaries tacitly admit by their practice. For by their labours to explain even the mysteries of religion they appeal to every man's private reason or judgment; and, therefore, they own in practice that every man has a tribunal erected in his own breast, a living oracle that he is to consult and be guided by; and that *reason* is the first foundation of all knowledge, the last standard of our judgment, and the supreme tribunal to which all appeals are, and from whence none can be made.

Upon the whole then it appears, that this pretended infallibility must have been suggested by Satan, as it has been an inexhaustible source of factions, animosities and persecutions; and that there must be several religions under the denomination of Popery. For, the partisans of the councils of Constance and Basil must say, that the infallibility set up by them is specifically different from the papal infallibility, which they look upon as chimera. Nay, the French suffer none to take degrees in their universities, till they first solemnly disclaim the pope's infallibility. The ignorant people must have another rule of faith viz. their own

private judgment such as it is ; for they understand no more of those disputes about infallibility than the inhabitants of the Marian Islands do any language in the world but their own. To allege the authority of their respective pastors would be multiplying the rules still ; for, every such pastor is, confessedly, fallible. How, then can they, without flagrant oppression, exercise an absolute jurisdiction over men's judgments and consciences ? Surely every pretender may say, what Mahomet did : " believe your prophet and believe your God."\*

I examined the Scriptures, and found that, as it would be absurd to call, by the name of covenant or contract, a piece of parchment that contained but some of the clauses of that covenant or contract, it would be equally absurd to call those writings the covenant and will of God, if they did not contain all that is necessary to salvation. For, as scripture was divinely inspired, it must have been executed by the directions of infinite wisdom ; therefore, it must sufficiently answer the purpose for which it was inspired ; otherwise we should impute to the all-wise God, what every man of common sense would be ashamed of. In a word, I found that to deny the sufficiency of Scripture for

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\* He that will not hear the Church let him be looked upon as an heathen and publican ; therefore, say the Romanists, the church is infallible. He that would not hear the scribes and pharisees in Moses's chair, was to be looked upon as an heathen and publican ; therefore the scribes and pharisees were infallible. He that will not allow that the civil power has a right to sentence any one to die, is to be looked upon as an heathen and publican ; therefore the civil power is infallible. Whoever resisteth the power of the civil magistrate, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation ; † therefore the civil magistrate is infallible. There is not one argument of theirs but may thus be retorted upon themselves.

† Romans 13. 2.



the purpose of salvation, would be to supersede its divine authority, and to turn the whole into priest-craft. Hence I concluded, that every man has an inviolable right to read the scriptures, and inform himself, as well as he can, of what they contain. And though he should mistake the meaning of those divine oracles, yet, if he be sincere, and co-operates with whatever measure of light and grace he is possessed of, his error will never be imputed; and he will be saved by virtue of his honest intention, as well as those of the best understanding; for, it is the intention that judges all men. *Quidquid agunt homines intentio judicat omnes.*

That the Scriptures are often perverted and abused, I grant. Yet, this is no reason that people should be deprived of the use of them. Meat and drink are abused daily, is that a reason that people should be debarred of the use of meat and drink? *Free-will* gave birth to all moral evil; is that a reason that God should have created man without *free-will*? Scripture is the covenant that God has established with *all* mankind; therefore, *every* man has an equal right to examine and know what it is. But though God has condescended to speak to us, by this covenant, in such a manner as sufficiently answers the purposes of our instruction and happiness, yet there are some things in it that transcend all human comprehension. And, indeed, if there was nothing in it so dark, so profound, as never to be comprehensively fathomed by human wit and penetration, there would be nothing in it worthy of the infinite wisdom of Him that speaks. For such is the perverseness of our tempers, that the more easy and familiar any thing is, the more we are apt to despise it. The clearest truth, when it becomes familiar to the mind, is apt to abate of its original spirit and influence. Therefore, there are, as there ought to



be, some things in Scripture that are fit, by their obscurity, to exercise our faith ; by their sublimity, to excite our curiosity and attention ; and, by their depth, to employ, nay, exhaust, all our labours and contemplation. The case of invincible ignorance, is infinitely more practical than the Popish divines are willing to admit. The patriarch Jacob is allowed to have been in the case with regard to Leah, his sister-in-law, as also the patriarch Judah, with regard to Tamar his daughter-in-law ; yet one might think it were an easy matter for them to remove it ; and still they are excused, because they had no doubt upon them about the matter. It is not possible that creatures endued with free-will should all act or think uniformly in every respect. Such an absolute uniformity is incompatible with the system of creation which is a kind of transcript of the infinite variety of the perfections of the Creator.

Upon inquiry into the final cause of religion in general, I found that the happiness of man is the centre of all religion ; that his temporal happiness is unattainable without moral rectitude ; that, as no duty can be required from him, but for his own good, this rectitude must be his principal duty ; and, therefore, that it must be the immediate end of both religion and polity. I discovered that without a deviation from this rule of moral rectitude, there would be no need of any system religious or political, for the law was added because of transgressions ; that, as political institutions are, in the order of things, prior to the religious, it is the prerogative of the civil power to punish transgressions ; and, therefore, that the church has no right to exercise any penal authority, but according as she is empowered by the state.

I found it was plain, from the history of our Saviour's life, that he took more pains to establish

the maxims of moral truth than he did to explain the mysteries and theory of religion ; that this is the path he has marked out for us through which he was to conduct us to life everlasting ; that religion, abstracted from this end, would be no more than a system of idle ceremonies ; that, therefore, it must be the touch-stone of religion ; and consequently, that, as the merit of all religion rises in proportion to its fitness for promoting this end, the Christian religion excels all the religious institutions that ever appeared in the world.

I found also that, as self-preservation is the first law of nature, the first moving principle in the human constitution, civil government must, of course, be prior to the ecclesiastical. Hence I concluded, that the latter was instituted to reinforce the former ; that, consequently, the church must be subordinate to the temporal prince ; that he is her visible head ; and that she cannot warp from this subordination without running eccentric to the end of her institution.

I found likewise, that an universal temporal supremacy, would at least, in our fallen state, be contrary to the order of infinite wisdom, as is evident by the confusion and desolation that would unavoidably ensue upon such a monarchy. Hence I concluded that an universal spiritual supremacy is contrary to the order of church institution ; that therefore, all national Christian churches are, by right divine, as independent of each other as their respective civil establishments ; that, consequently, the pretended necessity of communion, in order to salvation, with one national christian church rather than another, is as groundless as the pretended supremacy of one over all the rest : and, therefore, that, that mode of government, where the church only seconds the state in temporals, and where mental liberty walks hand in hand with civil

liberty and property, is not only the most perfect constitution in the world, but also that which truly corresponds with the intent of a creation of free beings.

Here I found, that our adversaries are grossly mistaken for want of a clear and precise idea of the nature and design of church-institution. They say, it is with the church as with every policed state or common wealth, there must be a supreme judge in the one as independent as in the other. But this is absolutely false; for the church is not a perfect community in temporal concerns, in that light she is only a subject or member of the community; she is as amenable to the state in temporal matters, as any other subject: she was instituted to assist the state by word and example under the additional sanction of eternal rewards, and punishments. If Christ had designed the church to be a perfect community in spirituals and temporals, with a supreme visible head distinct from the temporal prince, he would not be the God of peace and order, but the author of discord and confusion; as two perfect communities, in one and the same establishment, would be at perpetual intestine war with each other. Such is the depravity of human nature, that every particular society of men who think themselves independent by their constitution, will be always watching with a jealous eye, to seize upon every opportunity for establishing their interests and asserting their pretended rights and privileges, even at the expense of the public peace and tranquillity.

I found upon further inquiry that religion is the vital principle of social and civil life, the bond of society, the ornament and glory of the creation, the sun-shine of the human mind, a living image of the divinity itself drawn upon the soul of man. Hence it follows that, as God is love, religion



without charity is but a lifeless carcass ; that religion needs no foil but its own evidence : that when religion ceases to be free it ceases to be right ; that to obtrude religion upon the world by coercion gives room for suspicion ; that fire and fagot and such other instruments of compulsion for religion's sake are sure marks of error and falshood. It was by sanguinary laws and persecutions that the heathen superstitions were upheld, which made some of their wise men cry out ' what a deluge of evils has religion involved the world in ! ' It was with fire and sword that the carnal doctrines of the Koran were propagated ; and I appeal to the history of past ages if the soil of Christendom has not been as much imbrued with human gore for religion's sake as ever the pagan or muhammedan was.

To conclude, I compared the Reformation with the church unreformed, and found the light they stood related to each other in, was parallel to the following case. A certain man devised a spacious and beautiful garden to his children with proper directions how to cultivate and improve it for their support. Those children in conformity to their father's will, exerted themselves in the beginning with the greatest care and assiduity. But, in process of time, some of them grew so lazy that they would not work while others were forced to bear the burden and heat of the day, When some would have the artless elegance and simplicity of their father's directions strictly observed, they were over-ruled by others who were for new-modelling and embellishing the garden upon the plan of the state and pageantry they saw in their neighbour's gardens ; and, in order to carry their point, set themselves up for sole judges and interpreters of their father's will, audaciously adding thereto whatever was thought necessary to countenance



their design, and persecuting all those that would not comply. At length some of them, who had been thus oppressed, resolved to stem the torrent of innovation and tyranny, and to adhere strictly to their father's will. Accordingly they went to work and first purged the will of all corruptions; then cleared a considerable part of the garden of all transplanted exotics and noxious weeds; and restored it to its primitive simplicity, order, and beauty.

The Christian church is the reality of the foregoing case. How then can any of the unreformed church say in contradistinction to the church reformed, that they stick to the old religion? By such a saying, they take the register by the wrong end, and apply the epithet 'old' most preposterously. The soil of the garden is the same, and common to all, — the culture and management are different, — whilst the simple original condition of it is restored, and every plant, which our heavenly Father hath not planted, is rooted up; surely that is what alone deserves the name of 'old.' But the introduction of those plants is a new thing the date of it is recent; we can point out the time when those innovations were made: and we can trace them through their several stages and progressions to this day.

As I have now given you, my brethern, of the Established church, this account of myself and the motives of my conversion, I trust, that my sincerity and future conduct will entitle me to some degree of your favor and protection. What I am to suffer from the resentment of those I have left, I have before my eyes, and am prepared for. It is unhappily their principle, and they pursue it too uniformly, to load, with all manner of scurrilities all those, especially priests, who are enlightened

enough to forsake their errors, and become Protestants. If they would hear me I would expostulate with them in meekness and brotherly love, and beseech them to consider how unbecoming, how unchristian a spirit they are actuated by. Do we cease to be men? Do we forfeit all right to humanity as soon as we become, what they are pleased to call heretics? Or is it that they so vehemently envy our establishment every accession of strength or credit, as to give us reason to suspect that it is impossible for them to be sincerely loyal to a Protestant government? That is a suspicion which, if christianity be too weak, common prudence and policy, one would think, should have influence enough to put them upon their guard against.

For God's sake let them look round the world, and compare their condition with those who differ from the national religion in other parts. In Spain, Portugal, Italy, and most parts where Popery is established, there is no other religion allowed in any degree. In France, it is true, where the Romish religion is of a more liberal cast, Protestants, who are extremely numerous, do meet together for the worship of God; but, even there, it is with the utmost privacy and caution, and sometimes with great danger; the ministers, if apprehended, being hanged, and the congregation sent to the gallies. And yet, this is the condition Protestants are reduced to by the arbitrary repeal of the edict of Nantz, a public law ratified in the most solemn manner, and declared perpetual and irrevocable. What confusion and distresses, what blood-shed and devastation, doth not the violent and sanguinary spirit of Popery occasion at present in Poland, in hopes of destroying the legal, established privileges of Protestants; whereas those of the Romish communion here, have the full, free, public, and

unenvied exercise of their religion? The disabling laws are intended, not for a persecution of their religion, or their persons, but for a security to the established religion and government. It is only a misconduct on their part that can give force to those laws to hurt them. At present they lie dormant, and I pray God they may always do so, which is the universal desire of all true Protestants. Why then this wrath, this envy and resentment against Protestants? And, after all, what is this religion at the bottom, that they are inflamed with all this furious zeal for? Is it, in fact, any thing more than a revival or refinement of the grossest errors of Paganism? Let any man of competent knowledge take a review of past ages, and he will find a surprising affinity and resemblance of allegorical habits, mystical rites, processional ceremonies, &c. between Popery and Heathenism. Idolatry and superstition were brought forth by ignorance, and nursed by credulity and avarice. The priests, who were in the beginning, conscious enough of the popular mistakes, countenanced the ignorant people in their delusion to serve their own views; and, at last, modelled religion into what would best please the imaginations of the vulgar — a system of pompous, but mystical and superstitious pageantry.

Heathenism fell at last from adoring all and every part of the universe, to adore, in a manner, nothing at all, by degenerating into the ridiculous doctrines of Astrology, whereby all religion and piety were utterly subverted. Christianity, in like manner, wherever Popery prevails, has degenerated into puerile, mimical, superstitious forms and practices of religion, too well known to need to be mentioned; but it is of some consequence to observe, that they are all of heathenish extrac-



tion.\* That being so, I think I may appeal to every impartial, thinking papist, who seriously reflects upon what I have said, whether he would not choose, of two extremes, to be of the plain, simple religion of nature alone, and turn deist, rather than remain as he is. But, thanks be to God, neither side of the alternative is necessary. Happily, there is a church ready to receive him, which is established on sound principles of reason, and genuine christianity—a church that displays reason and revelation in their true light; that asserts the privileges and dignity of the one, without derogating from those of the other; that points out the proper end of each, viz.—the happiness of mankind in this world as well as in the next. In a word, a church which teaches, that reason was the first rule of conduct given to man; that revelation was supplied to direct and assist its motions, and rectify its mistakes; and, therefore, that whoever believes the creation as related by Moses, must believe the redemption as related by the Evangelists; and, consequently, that the Author of the creation, is the Author of our redemption.

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\* Nay, the fundamental principle of all religious truth, is utterly subverted by the spirit of popery. For the main argument, urged by divines against those who say that religion is nothing but priest-craft, and state policy, is, that the happy effects of it could never be accomplished by a lie; or in other words, that it is a contradiction in the nature of things, that the peace and happiness of mankind could be more effectually promoted by falshood than by truth. Now, the force of this argument is destroyed by the pretended intent of the pious frauds, &c. that are practised in the church of Rome, which is to revive and keep up a spirit of devotion and religion among the people. This has been alleged not long ago by a priest M—— G——n P. P. of S——v——l——m——s, in this province, who endeavoured, upon that plea, to justify himself, for suffering some enthusiasts to depose at his altar, that they had seen, in a vision, a great many Protestants in hell, and a great many Papists in purgatory, but no Protestants.

A church, of course, whose doctrine is that which was brought from heaven by the Son of the living God!

It is an incontestible fact that the heathens, by worshipping idols or images, dead men and women, &c. were guilty of gross and abominable errors. That this heathenish worship has been adopted by the church of Rome, will appear, by comparing the doctrines and practices of both with each other. I shall begin with Image-worship as that was the first introduction of idolatry and superstition into the world.

The Romanists say that, though they bow or kneel before images, yet such adoration or worship is only relative inasmuch as they refer it to the prototypes or originals; that they ask nothing of those images, nor put any confidence in them; and that they pay them no more adoration than we do to the Lord's supper, or to the king, &c. Now, that the heathens endeavoured, by the same or the like reasons, to palliate the absurdity of their image-worship, and to persuade the world that it was only a relative honor they paid to their idols, will appear by the following arguments.

We learn from Origen, Arnobius, Lactantius and others, that the heathen philosophers, who stood up as advocates for paganism, after christianity had made its appearance in the world, maintained that their idol-worship was only relative, being ultimately referred to the one supreme God; that the worship paid to the sun, for instance, was only symbolical, as that was the most glorious image of the deity; that images ought to be worshipped, because they were so many representations of the divinity; that there could be no religion, where there were no altars nor images; and, consequently that the christian religion, as it had neither, was only fiction and imposture.

Celsus, as Origen tells us,\* speaks thus: "who believes that our idols are so many Gods? they are only so many symbols of the divinity; and we do not adore them but in honor of God."

Plato, Aristotle, Maximus Tyrius and others say, that it was a wise thing to contrive images to help human infirmity, and to remind the ignorant people, of the objects of devotion and religion, and that they ought to be worshipped as so many signs or representations of the divinity; and that the sun, moon, and stars were to be worshipped, not as gods, but as images, or, as it were statues of the gods.

Porphyry, as Eusebius tells us, says that images are the books of idiots. And Arnobius tells us† it was usual with the heathens to say, that the ancients were very sensible, there was nothing divine in their images; that they had no feeling nor understanding; and, still that they were a wise and wholesome institution, as they served to soften and reform the rude and ignorant, by placing a representation of the Deity before their eyes.

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\* Lib. 7, Contra Celsum.

† Lib. 6, Contra Gentes. In which book we find the following words, whereby it evidently appears that the very palliations, which are made use of by the Romanists at present, to justify their Image-worship, were practised by the Heathens in Arnobius's time. "Sed erras, inquit, & laboris; nam neque nos era neque auri argentique materias, neque alias quibus signa confiunt eas esse per se deos & religiosa decernimus numina: sed eos in his colimus cosque veneramur quos dedicatio infert sacra & fabrilibus efficit inhabitare simulachris.

Again: Illud etiam dicere simulachrorum assertores solent—non ignorasse antiquos nihil habere numinis signa, neque ullum omnino inesse his sensum, sed propter indomitum atque imperitum vulgus, quæ pars in populis atque in civitatibus maxima est, salutariter ea concilioque formasse; ut velut quadam specie objecta his numinum abjicerent asperitatem metu: arbitratique presentibus sese sub diis agere, facta impia deponerent, et ad humana officia morum immutatione transirent.



Hereupon, Theodoret observes,\* in his discourse to the Greek heathens, that the institution of images, far from being wise and wholesome, was rather the work of the devil, in order, by this means, to seduce the rude and illiterate into the absurdities of polytheism and superstition. A just remark ! for Jeremy says in chap. 10, that images are a doctrine of vanities and falshood, and the work of falshood and errors ; and are therefore according to Isaiah, chap. 2, fit only for moles and bats, and such other animals, being nothing but blind works in themselves. Upon the whole then it is sufficiently apparent, that the heathens alleged the same reasons, to justify their image-worship, which the Romanists do to justify their own.

Now, that any worship paid to images, though referred even to the true God, is heathenish and superstitious, appears not only from the case of the heathens who were convicted of idolatry and superstition, though they pretended to refer their worship to the true God, but also from the case of the Israelites, Exod. 32, who were guilty of idolatry, and punished accordingly, for worshipping the golden calf, though this worship was only relative and referred even to the true God. That it was only relative, appears from the context. For, as soon as this golden idol was finished, the Israelites cried out : this is thy God, O Israel ! who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, *i. e.* this signifies, this symbolizes, this is to you, a medium of worship to adore that God who brought you out of Egypt. Accordingly we find that Aaron proclaimed the next day a feast unto the Lord, and offered sacrifices to him on an altar built before this idol.

The Romanists own it was in honor of the true God here called Jehovah, that the feast was cele-

\* Serm. 7 ad Grecos infid.

brated; but deny it was the true God that was meant by the word *elohim* the name given to the idol by a metonymy. Who then but the true God brought the Israelites out of Egypt? it was the true God that was honoured by the feast in the presence of the idol; therefore it was the true God that was signified by it. Though the word *elohim* be in the plural number, it must be understood here in a singular sense, as it is in several other parts of scripture; there are other languages beside the Hebrew where the plural number is often used to signify a single person. Add to this that Nehemiah chap. 9, expressed the meaning of the Israelites, on this occasion, in the singular number.\*

The Israelites had been bred in a country fond of symbols, where they used to see one thing represented by another; and where the symbolical pageantry, was carried to such excess that no religious duty was performed without it. Had they imagined that this calf, they had made themselves, had been the God of their fathers, the God that brought them out of Egypt, or any god at all, their folly would have been utterly inconsistent with our notion of the rational nature of man. They would have been absolutely incapable of all moral and civil government; and could only be accounted idiots or madmen. Nay, they would have been guilty of an unexampled stupidity; for the heathens never worshipped, nor looked upon any inanimate thing in itself as a god. They indeed worshipped all the parts of nature, either because they were the symbols or images of the gods, or because they were the residence or temples of the gods, or because they were the body or

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\* Zeh Eloheika asher bengelka mimitzraim. 'This is thy God who made thee ascend from Mitzraim;' i.e. who brought thee out of Egypt.

parts of the body of the supreme God, or, as some thought, so many parts or powers of the Divinity, to which they gave the several appellations of particular gods and goddesses. For, St. Austin says it was the attributes and properties of the true God that were worshipped by the Heathens under the notions of gods and goddesses. But though they were divided in their notions of those gods and goddesses (for some of them did, certainly, worship deified men and women) yet, they never worshipped any inanimate thing as a God.

Upon the whole then it appears, that any religious worship paid to God or any other being, by means of symbols or images, is idolatrous and superstitious. For which reason Moses\* absolutely interdicted, by the word *phesel*, the worshipping of any carved or graven images; and by the word *themulah* in the same verse, any image or likeness whatsoever. Hence the distinction is nugatory and frivolous which the Romanists make between “thou shalt not make a graven image,” and “thou shalt not make to thyself, (or) unto thee, a graven image;” what difference is there between “take a wife,” and “take to thee a wife?” Such chicaning is but grappling at a bull-rush, to save themselves from being drowned.

The Romanists say that they don't pray to images, nor ask any thing of them, nor put any confidence in them.—This indeed is throwing dust in people's eyes. In the hymn they sing to the crucifix, they have these words: *O Crux ave Spes unica—auge piis Justitiam, reisque dona Veniam.* Was there more than this ever said to any heathen idol? could there be more said even to God himself? Is there nothing asked here of this image of our Saviour crucified? Is there no confidence reposed in it? The cross is here saluted with:

\* Exod. 20. 4,



‘Hail! long may you live and prosper,’ &c. for all these salutations are implied in the Hebrew word, *ave*; salutations that cannot without a palpable absurdity be addressed to any but a rational being. How can the wood of the cross be our only hope? How can it increase our righteousness or forgive us our sins? A bit of a stick or stone to be our only hope and to forgive us our sins? *Risum teneatis amici!*

But, to complete the mummery, the worship of *latria* is ordered by the Church of Rome\* to be paid to the cross. Then the cross must be another god, as the worship of *latria* is the highest worship that can be paid to God himself. And as the cross is only an idol or image, the *Crucis latria* must be *idolatria*.

If they say, as the old heathens did upon a similar occasion, that it is only a relative honor, a *latria* in an inferior degree, they pay to the cross; beside, that this is the very idolatry the heathens were guilty of, and that the Israelites were punished for, it will follow, let them call it by what names they please of *dulia* or *hyperdulia*, that the angels and saints are worshipped with the same *latria* but in an inferior degree; and, therefore, that they are worshipped as gods but of an inferior order, which was the doctrine of the heathens.

If they say that the worship paid to angels and saints is specifically different from that which is paid to God, there will be more than one God still, for God and the cross are two as distinct objects, as any in all nature. Therefore, as the *latria*, that is due to God, is ordered to be paid to the cross, it must terminate in an object as distinct from God as any thing in the universe. Consequently, if it be paid to the cross in an equal degree, the cross is worshipped as a god, equal with the God of Heaven. But, if in an in-

\*See second council of Nice, Thomas of Aquin, Bellarmin &c.

ferior degree, then the cross is worshipped as a god of inferior rank, which is the very dilemma the old heathens were reduced to. Therefore, when they say they do not intend, by their worship to commit such idolatry and superstition, they are no more to be believed than a man who runs another through the body, and declares he did not mean to take away his life. Of two contrary volitions that which is carried into execution excludes the other. What would become of our laws, if such self justifications were once received? It is rare to find a criminal that does not choose to traverse rather than submit.

As Rome pagan\* was for a long time without statues or images, yet adopted them at last, it was even so with Rome christian†. But according as she adopted and enforced this worship she met with opposition. At last, Constantine, bishop of Nacolio in Phrygia, with the emperors Leo Isaurus, Constantinus Copronymus, Leo IV, with several others, and a council of 338 bishops assembled at Constantinople, anno 754, opposed this innovation, and broke down all the images they could meet with, for which they were called iconoclasts, or image breakers. But such was the growing power of Rome at this time, that all efforts for a reformation proved abortive. For, the Pope set all his engines to work, and in thirty-three year's time assembled a council at Nice, where the decrees of Constantinople were rescinded, and all the image breakers anathematized.

Now, though the decrees of this council were so monstrous, that they were opposed and condemned by a council, held by Charlemain, king of France, and emperor of the west at Frankfort, anno 794, where even some of the Italian bishops as-

\* Vid. Plutarch in. vita Num. Pomp., Varronem, &c.

† Orig contra Celsum. Arno Min. Fel. Lactant, &c.

sisted : by another held at Paris, anno 824, by the British churches, and by several crowned heads, bishops and divines ; yet it is the Nicene doctrine that the church of Rome maintains to this day. It was decreed in this council (of Nice) that the same worship that was paid to the prototypes, should be paid to their images. Constantine, bishop of Constance, cried out in the assembly :—" I pay images the same worship that is due to the life-giving Trinity ; and I anathematize whoever refuses to do likewise, as I do, Mareion and Manes," This was the voice of the whole council.

To palliate this worship, the Romanists say, that it was only a relative honor that was decreed by those bishops, and that they offer no other to images. But, beside, that such relative honor or worship is idolatrous and superstitious, as I have already demonstrated, I say it was an absolute worship that was decreed, and is still paid, to images. If it was only a relative honor that they pay to the cross, for instance, when they adore it, their meaning for these words : ' Hail ! O holy cross, our only hope ! ' &c. would be : ' Hail ! O Jesus Christ, our only hope ! ' &c. But this is not their meaning ; for, beside that they know the cross is not Jesus Christ, and that a man who means Paul and calls James, must forget his meaning, or is trifling or doating ; if any man should, when they are adoring the cross in Popish countries, say : *Ave Jesu Christe spes unica* instead of : *Ave crux spes unica*, he would be clapped into the Inquisition or elsewhere, and be punished for heresy ; which shows it is to the cross itself they pay their worship.

This is confirmed by their manner of worship. They look upon the host to be Jesus Christ the true God, and they adore it accordingly. Now there is no worship that they offer to the host, but



they offer to images. For they prostrate themselves before them, they pray to them, they deck and adorn them with flowers, &c. they crown them, they light tapers, they offer incense, they fix them upon their altars; they carry them in procession, they go on pilgrimage to visit them, they kiss them, they adore them. Those abuses are so palpable, so shocking, that several of the popish divines themselves have cried out loudly against them. Ludovivives, a Spanish divine, owns, \*that he is shocked to see the same worship offered to the creature and the Creator. He says he does not see what difference there is between the christians and the heathens, in this respect. Polydore Virgil† looks upon it to be, at least, next to a flagrant impiety. Gregory of Neocesarea says, that the pagan religion was the mother of images and image-worship. Eusebius, in the seventh book of his ecclesiastical history, says, on occasion of a statue of our Saviour with the woman that he cured of the bloody flux, which was to be seen in his time in the city of Cesarea, that it was a pagan custom. George Cassander, a popish divine, owns candidly, in his consultation, addressed to the emperors Ferdinand and Maximilian, on the subject of the controversies between the Papists and Protestants, that the Church of Rome has copied after the Heathens in this respect. “The thing is too clear” says he; “image-worship is carried to extravagance and superstition; the people of our religion are nothing inferior to the old heathens, in making, adorning, and worshipping images.” Agobard, about the year 835, archbishop of Lyons, says in his book against pictures and images, that we ought not to worship any image of God, but that which is God himself, *i. e.* his eternal Son. Claudius, bishop of

\* In Aug. de Civ. Dei l. 8.

† De invent rerum, lib. 6.

Turin, with several others, opposed and condemned the use of images. It is in vain, therefore, for the Romanists to say, that the council of Nice was condemned only for decreeing, as it was thought an absolute worship to be paid to images ; for all worship of images, private masses, pilgrimages, invocation of saints and angels, prayers in an unknown tongue, human traditions, pretended visions and miracles, &c. were condemned by Charlemain, and several others.

That the distinction of image-worship into absolute and relative, is illusory, appears also from the miracles and extraordinary virtues they ascribe to images. John Damascen, one of the most noted bigots of the eighth century, says, that having lost his arm, he prayed to the image of the Virgin Mary, to have it restored, and that it was accordingly on the very day it had been cut off. It is said, in the life of Thomas of Aquin, that the crucifix approved of his work, by saying : *Bene scripsisti de me Thoma.* Cæsarius, who was bishop of Arles, in the beginning of the sixth century, tells us a story of a man who, having made a compact with the devil, prayed to the image of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms, to forgive him his crime ; the Virgin forgave him ; but the child looked sour at him and turned him off ; then the Virgin said, “ O ! my dear child, forgive that poor man ; ” the child refused it. Then she placed him upon the altar, and prostrating herself at his feet, said : “ My dear child forgive that man for my sake ; ” the child then took up his mother, and said : ‘ I forgive him.’

In the acts of the council of Nice, we read the following stories. A woman of Cesarea in Palestine, was struck with convulsions for laughing at the image of St. Anastasius ; but as soon as she begged pardon of the image, she was cured. A

Jew once struck a crucifix with a knife, and immediately there gushed out a prodigious quantity of blood and water, which being gathered up, served to cure all kinds of diseases. A countryman going into a chapel, and seeing the image of the Virgin Mary, struck it with a goad he had in his hand, and knocked out one of its eyes; but no sooner was he out of the chapel than he was punished by the image; for it knocked out one of his eyes with the point of his goad, which he chanced to break in striking his oxen.

We are told that Scotus, surnamed the Subtle Doctor, was honoured with a bow from the Virgin's picture, by way of thanks for his learned arguments, in defence of the immaculate conception; that Abbot Gualbert received the like honor for pardoning a man who had murdered his brother. That Francis Xavier, having dropped a crucifix in the sea recovered it by means of a fish that caught it and came up to the shore to present it to the saint. We are told also that images have shed tears; have sweated even drops of blood; have distilled oil, have sung and wept by turns. We are told, likewise, that several of those images were brought from heaven, for instance, the image called our Lady of Montserrat in Italy, which, they say, was found in a cave surrounded by angels, singing the praises of the virgin. Now, all this is but a copy of paganism. The heathens tell us that the palladium or image of Minerva, which Æneas took out of the temple of that goddess in Troy, and carried with him to Italy, was brought or came of itself from heaven\*. Virgil tells us, that this image was seen to sweat. Cicero relates the same

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\* We read in the life of Numa Pompilius, by Plutarch, that that monarch received a target or brazen buckler from heaven, whereby the Romans were miraculously delivered from a pestilence, that raged throughout all Italy.



thing of the statue of Apollo at Cumæ in Campania; of the statue of Victory at Capua, and of the statue of Mars in Rome, all in his own time. Titus Livius tells us,\* that, when the Romans asked the statue of Juno at Veix, whether it would consent to be translated to Rome, it bowed the head and said it was well pleased. It was said of a statue of Mark Anthony that it sweated blood in the time of the war between Augustus and Cleopatra. In a word, it is recorded of their idols that they spoke, sung, wept, performed cures and miracles, and punished all such as offered them any irreverence.

The Romanists, for instance St. Francis of Sales, in his advice to confessors, recommends the kissing of images to the people as a preservative against sin. It is recorded, by way of encomium of their saints, that they used to carry several images about them, which they kissed so often, that they wore them away by dint of kissing, Nay, they reposed such confidence in images, that the greatest comfort they can administer to sick people and criminals, is to present a crucifix to them to kiss. This also is a pagan custom. We learn from Scripture,† that it was usual with the heathens to kiss their idols. Among the many sacrileges that Verres was accused of by Cicero, one was that of having stolen a brazen statue of Hercules, whose lips and chin had been worn off by the force of kisses. And, in St. Austin's days, the heathens were laughed at by the christians for kissing the legs of the horses that, in effigy, drew the statue of Apollo riding in his chariot.

Although it is a degradation of the Deity, and an affront to a being whose glorious essence is uncircumscribed, to pretend to represent him by any sensible image whatsoever, as that would be

\*Lib. 5

† Kings 19, xviii. Hosea 13, ii

forming the glory of the incorruptible God into the resemblance of corruptible man; yet, the Church of Rome has not only imitated the heathens in this, but also in the attributes, postures, and attitudes they give their idols.

Saturn was represented under the figure of an old man, with a scythe in his hand; Jupiter with horns; Anubis or Mercury, the door-keeper, with two faces, a key, a wand, a serpent &c. Apollo with a spear in his hand, killing the dragon; Minerva with the moon on her head, a halberd in her hand, and an owl and spider by her side; Bacchus with a chalice in his hand; Silenus mounted on an ass; Neptune with a trident; Juno with a peacock; Pluto accompanied with human skulls; Orpheus with a harp; Atlas with a mountain on his shoulders; Vulcan with a hammer; Isis, the queen of heaven, crowned with the sun, moon, and stars, and the child Horus in her lap, &c. &c. In the Church of Rome, we likewise find God represented under the form of an old man; the Trinity by three faces rising one out of another; our Saviour by the figure of a lamb, a gardener shifting his side from Mary Magdalen, &c.; the Holy Ghost by the figure of a dove, fiery tongues, &c.; the Virgin Mary crowned queen of heaven, with stars on her head, the moon under her feet, and a child in her lap; Moses with horns; an angel called Michael with a spear in his hand, killing the devil, represented with horns, jaws, and cloven feet; Thaumaturgus with a mountain on his shoulders; St. Peter with keys; St. Michael, like old Mercury, gathering the souls together, and conducting them with a wand in his hand; St. John with a chalice; St. James with the shells of fishes; St. Paul with a sword; St. Cecilia with a harp; St. Patrick with serpents; St. Gertrude

with rats; St. Genovesa with a candle in her hand, and the devil at her feet; St. George with a dragon; St. Catherine trampling her father under her feet; Paul, the founder of the order of hermits, with a raven bringing him a piece of bread; Anthony of Egypt frightening away the devil with a leer; Thomas of Aquin with angels girding his loins about, to render him insensible to all emotions of concupiscence; Athanasius hid in a corner, with a spider spinning her web without side to conceal him from the Arian bishops; Anthony of Padua, with a mallet in his hand, pounding the heads of heretics, and preaching on the sea shore to the fishes, who bowed their heads, by way of saying 'Amen' to every thing he said\*, with unnumbered bizarre and grotesque figures, such as ghosts appearing with their heads downward, and their feet up, &c.

The heathens used to set up the images of their guardian deities over their doors, at the corners of their houses, on their bridges and high roads. The same is practised in the Church of Rome, by a decree of the abovementioned Council of Nice. They are to be seen every where in Popish countries.

The heathens had such veneration and zeal for their idols, that they punished with death such as offered them any irreverence. Witness the account that Pausanias gives us of a parcel of boys who were all stoned to death in a town in Arcadia, for dragging about a little statue of the goddess Diana, with a cord about the neck of it. This impious and barbarous practice is continued in the Church of Rome, where any irreverence offered to images is looked upon to be so great a sacrilege, that it is punished with fire and faggot. Witness

\* See the Sermon at the end of this Work.



the account we had in the newspapers of one who had been cruelly treated in France for trampling on a crucifix. Witness also the account Beza gives us, in his Treatise of Images, of one John le Clerk, who had his fist cut off, and his nose plucked away with a pair of hot pincers, and then was burned alive, for knocking down a little statue that stood in a chapel near Metz.

The heathens, notwithstanding the exorbitant veneration they had for their idols, treated them with indignity, as often as they miscarried in any expedition. Witness the people of Arcadia,\* who used to revenge their ill success in hunting upon their god Pan, by pelting him with onions. Sometimes they pi--ed upon them, and sometimes (as is practised still in the East Indies,) they besmeared them with filth. Images are treated in like manner in the Church of Rome. For, we learn from Molanus, in his History of Holy Images, Bodinus, in his Demonology, and others, that images are sometimes dragged into a river, or pool of water, to oblige them to bring rain, or to punish them for not bringing fair weather; and that, on feast days, a table is spread, and covered with flowers, and the image of the saint set upon it; and that if the day offers fair, they crown it with those flowers; but if it rains, they cover it with puddle.

Lastly, the heathens had a form of consecration for their idols or images, by virtue of which they believed those images became either the bodies of the gods, or the residence and temples of the gods, or at least that some divine virtue or power, or some particle of the divinity was infused into them, for which they ought to be worshipped. Tertullian tells the heathens, 'I have nothing to

\*Pausanias in Arcad.

say against your images, but that they are of the same matter with our frying-pans and kettles, and change their destiny by consecration.' And Minutius Felix says, 'Behold it (the idol), is melted, forged, and yet it is not a god. Behold ! it is gilt, finished, erected, and yet it is not a god. Behold ! it is adorned, consecrated, and worshipped, and then it is a god.' As soon as any image was thus consecrated, the congregation were ordered,\* by the sound of bells, or other instruments, to fall down and worship it. Then †it was carried in procession upon men's shoulders, attended with bands of all kinds of music. Afterwards, the people pressed down on all sides, in order to kiss it, or to rub their hands or clothes to it, or something belonging to it.

The same pageantry is observed in the Church of Rome. There is no honour or virtue ascribed to their images, at least in the general, 'till they are consecrated ; but then, as Thomas of Aquin says, 'they acquire some supernatural or divine virtue, for which they are to be honoured with the same worship that is due to the prototypes they are dedicated to.' Accordingly, they are decked, they are crowned, they are carried in procession with the utmost solemnity, as among the old heathens ; and the people prostrate themselves before them, invoke them, and think themselves happy if they can kiss them, or rub their beads or clothes to them.

They impose upon us, when they say, that we pay the same worship to the Lord's Supper, and to the king, that they pay to images. Did any Protestant ever say, 'O bread and wine our only hope, hail and prosper ! long may you live in health and spirits ! forgive the sins of the guilty, and increase

\*Daniel 3.

†Baruch 6.

the righteousness of the pious ! There is a positive precept for receiving the sacrament, which we must do in some posture or other of sitting, standing, or kneeling, which last posture we choose as being more decent, but not more essential than any other. We don't order the worship of *latria*, or *hyperdulia* or *dulia*, to be paid to it. But where is the positive precept for worshipping images ?

There is a wide difference between a civil and a religious worship or honour. 'Tis only a civil honour we pay to the king, and to each other, but it is a religious honour or worship they pay to images, as they confess themselves.

Upon the whole, then it is plain, that the Romanists worship images in the same sense that the old heathens did ; and consequently, that, as they look upon their host to be the body of God in virtue of the consecration, they also look upon images to be either the bodies of God, &c. or their temples ; for it seems they can command God, &c. to reside where they please. Wherefore it is usual with them to say, that for instance, every holy person is literally, the temple of the Holy Ghost, as they say that there is a devil lodged in every infant 'till he is baptized ; for they breathe thrice upon the infant, and desires the devil to turn out, and give place to the Holy Ghost the comforter. And, in the order for burying the dead, they require of God to depute an angel to guard the grave. Upon which I have heard a priest, some years ago, desire the people round the grave to pray to God, that he might send an angel from heaven to guard that corpse 'till the day of judgment.



## ANGELS AND SAINTS.

THAT the Church of Rome has, in this point as well as in that of Image-worship, adopted the plan and principles of the old heathens, will plainly appear by confronting the doctrines and practises of both.

The Platonists and Pythagoreans held, that there are vast numbers of intermediate powers dwelling in the airy regions between the highest æther and our earth, by whom our prayers and desires are carried up to the Gods, and to whom the management of things here below is committed; and that to them religious worship is to be paid. They even represented the worshipping inferior deities as an honour done to the Supreme, and found fault with those who were for paying their adorations to the supreme God only.

Tertullian tells us, in his Apology for the Christian Religion, that the notion the generality of the heathens entertained of the divinity, was this: 'The supreme power belongs to one only God, but he delegates the rest of the Gods to perform his functions and administer the affairs of the universe in subordination to him. The court of heaven is like ours upon earth, where the emperor or king is superior to all, and has certain ministers and officers appointed for the several departments of the administration, to whom respect and honour is to be paid according to their rank and office respectively.'

The philosopher Celsus\* says, that those who worship many Gods, do nothing but what is agreeable to the great God, inasmuch as it is not allowed to worship any but such as he has qualified for that honour.

\*Apud Origen.

Plato says, in the fifth book of his Republic, that they who die in war, after having behaved with courage and bravery, become holy and terrestrial demons, averters of evil, and guardians of mankind ; and that their sepulchres ought to be honoured, and they themselves worshipped as demons.

Apuleius\*, in every edition of his book *de Deo Socratis*, speaks to the following purpose : ‘ There are certain middle divinities or powers between the highest heavens, and the lowest earth, by whom our prayers and deserts are conveyed up to the gods. They are called in Greek *demons*.— These are the messengers who carry the prayers of men to the gods, and bring back gifts from the gods to men. They go and come to convey hence prayers, thence supplies. They are, as it were, interpreters between gods and men, and bearers of salutations.’ Nay it was a common assertion among the heathens, that the worshipping inferior deities, as well as images, was necessary to help human infirmity, and to keep the common people from running into atheism ; and that for the instruction of the vulgar, the gods ought to be represented under human, and the like forms. Though some of them, for instance Plutarch, in his Treatise de Osir. & Isid. deny the gods to have been of the human race, and though others endeavoured to turn them into allegory, and interpreted them as signifying physical causes, or the phænomena of nature, or even the several attributes of the Deity ; yet, for the reasons above mentioned, they approved and recommended the popular worship of dead men and women, &c. and looked upon every attempt for a reformation of those abuses to be a high degree of impiety and prophaneness, as tending to the utter subversion of all religion among the people.

\*He flourished in the 2d century.

All this has been copied by the church of Rome. She says, that the one God who is supreme lord and master of all, is attended, honoured and served by numbers of inferior deities, whom she calls by the soft names of angels and saints, though she sometimes calls them Gods too, as Divus Paulus, Divus Augustinus, &c. she says, they are so many messengers, interpreters and mediators, between God and men, carrying petitions to heaven, &c. she prays to them, and pays them religious worship; she considers them as so many guardians of mankind; she honours the sepulchres of the saints by worshipping their relics, &c. she has divided the administration of the universe into so many departments; for each of which she has appointed one or other of those subaltern deities. But the Virgin Mary is the prime minister and grand superintendant of all. She is called 'Queen of Angels and Saints,' nay, 'and of the whole universe'; and to collect the whole heathen extravagance into two words, she is called '*Mater Dei*'. 'The Mother of God himself,' an expression that implies a contradiction in the very terms: for though the second person of the glorious Trinity was hypostatically united to the humanity of the Messiah in her womb, she was no more the mother of God for that, than any man's mother whatsoever is the mother of his soul. Nor will all their postliminous and forced definitions of personality ever justify this heathenish expression. What can be more absurd than such expressions as these: 'A God was born,' 'a God hungered and thirsted,' 'a God was crucified,' 'a God died and was buried?' Here we find the whole tide of heathenish extravagance pouring upon us at once. This extravagance was swallowed at a draught by the council of Ephesus, who condemned poor Nestorius for rejecting those heathenish expressions, and



defined that the virgin Mary is verily and indeed the mother of God, *Vere dicitur ac est Deipara.\**

The heathens had their mother of God, nay, and mother of all the gods.

The virgin Mary is not only, in like manner, called and believed to be the mother of God; but she is sometimes confounded with God himself. For, though they at one time implore her intercession, they at another time address themselves to her as to the true God. For instance, in the hymn *Ave Maris Stella*, they say to her; *Funda nos in pace—Solve vincla reis, profer lumen cæcis mala nostra pelle—Nos culpis solutos mites fac & custos, vitam præsta puram, iter para tutum.* And in another hymn they say: *Maria mater gratiæ, dulcis parens elementiæ, tu nos ab hoste protege et hora mortis suscipe.* And in another place they say to her: *A periculis cunctis libera nos virgo gloriosa.* Now I ask what can God do more than is here ascribed to the virgin Mary? Is not she here confounded with God himself? Is it not God alone that can establish us in rest and peace, that can forgive us our sins, that can by his grace bring us to the light of faith, that can heal up all our wounds, and deliver us from all evil? Is it not our Saviour that is to receive us at the hour of death? Is she not here confounded with our Saviour, and God, and all? Certainly none but a God can perform what is here required of her.

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\* It is remarkable, that the title of 'Mother of God' is no where in Scripture attributed to the virgin Mary; and even though it were, yet that would not justify the stile of modern times. For it is beyond dispute, as will appear farther on, that the holy writers were often under a necessity of expressing themselves in the heathen manner, in order to be understood. The modus of the divine incarnation, for instance, transcends all human comprehension; wherefore St. Luke, to give us some kind of idea of it, was obliged to adopt the figures and expressions used by the heathens on similar occasions.

The heathens neglected the worship of the true God, according as the popular deities came into vogue. The Romanists have, in like manner, neglected the true God, for they very seldom call upon him ; and when they do, they join the virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and other saints with him, for fear he could not, at least should not, do the business without them. They have such confidence in those saints, that it is one of them they always call upon when they are in distress. It is to them they make their vows, and to them they return their thanks, when they are delivered out of danger.

The heathen gods were represented carrying on their lawless amours with each other, and with the human species. The angels are introduced likewise under the names of *Incubi* and *Succubae*.

The heathens had their god Mercury supplied with wings, and appointed to lead the dead. The church of Rome has her archangel Michael supplied likewise with wings, and deputed to conduct souls to their respective destinations. And as the god Mercury had hymns and supplications made to him to befriend the dead committed to his charge, Michael is honoured and supplicated likewise ; he is called 'The primate,' 'The standard-bearer,' &c. The eighth of May is dedicated to the memory of his pretended apparition on that day, though it is plain, by comparing the two events, that this romance was formed upon the fable of the apparition of Apollo, at Delphos, which gave occasion to the building of a temple there. All the difference between the two stories is, that it was in the form of a bull he appeared at Garganns,\* whereas it was in the form of goats that Apollo appeared at Parnassus. And as Apollo was represented killing the dragon Python, so is Michael represented

\* A mountain in Apulia.

killing the devil, who in imitation of the Egyptian Python or Typhon, is said to have horns, cloven feet, &c. The heathens had their cosmolatry, astrolatry, herolatry, idolatry, &c. The Romanists have in like manner, their angel-worship, saint-worship, water-worship, oil-worship, relic-worship, tomb-worship, well-worship, &c. &c.

The heathens would not allow any deceased man or woman to be worshipped with divine honours, 'till they were canonized. Thus Tertulian says,\* "The fate of each of your gods depends upon the approbation of your senate. Such or such a one is not to be honoured, because he had not a majority of voices in his favour. Your gods stand or fall, according as they are received or rejected by the suffrages of men here upon earth." The cause of the gods was pleaded at the tribunals of men, and such as were found worthy of divine honours, were canonized and registered by a sanction of law, as we find by the following words quoted by Cicero out of the old heathen canon law: *Divos, et eos qui cœlestes semper habiti sunt colunto: et ollos quos in Cælum merita vocarint, Herculem, Bacchum, Æsculapium, &c.*

The case is the same in the church of Rome. No one can be honoured as a saint, without the consent and approbation of the Pope, and his conclave, according to a rule in that case made and provided by Alexander the third,† in the following words: *Etiam si per eum miracula fierent non liceret vobis ipsum pro sancto absque auctoritate Romanæ Ecclesiæ venerari.* But when the devil's advocate (for so he that pleads against the saint is called) gives up the cause, the saint is received, and returned on the list of the saints, and ordered from thenceforth to be called and honoured as such. Then he is invoked in the

\* In Apol. Cap. 5 and 13. † Lib. 3. Dec. Tit. 45. Cap. 1.



public offices, and prayers of the church. He has temples dedicated to him, and altars erected to his memory. Feasts are instituted, and masses said in his honour. Hymns are composed in his praise. His image is set up to be worshipped. His relics are collected, and preserved, and set upon the same altar with their host. In a word, people flock from all sides to kiss his ashes, his bones, his hair, and every thing belonging to him; and pay him the same adoration and honour they pay to God, nay a great deal more, for they never call upon God all the while. I have seen people, in a church in Paris, where the sacrament or host was exposed on the altar, turning their backs to the host, and addressing their prayers to one of their saints, who had been buried near the church-door. So that one may apply to those saint-worshippers what Tertullian said to the heathens of his time; \* "What adoration or honour do you show to your gods, that you don't equally pay to your deified men and women? You dedicate temples, and erect altars to the one and the other. It is the same ornaments, ceremonies, &c. that you use for both."

The heathens had such confidence in their gods, that they invoked them in time of distress, and made vows and performed them accordingly. Thus Pliny tells us † that a certain man, being pursued by a lion, got up into a tree and vowed to Bacchus, that he would build a temple in his honour as soon as he returned home, if he delivered him from the present danger. Whereupon the lion presented himself in a suppliant posture at the foot of the tree, by way of begging of him to come down, to relieve him from the pain he suffered by a bone he had between his teeth, which he did accordingly without the ill consequences of saving a

\* Apol. 6. 13.

† Hist. natur. 1. 8. Cap. 16.

thief from the gallows ; and as soon as he got home fulfilled his vow. The Romanists in like manner when they are in danger, invoke the virgin Mary or some other saint, and make vows : and, when they escape the danger, give all the glory to the saint. This custom of making vows in time of danger is carried to such extravagance, that one who was in a storm at sea, as recorded by Poghius an Italian writer who flourished in the beginning of the fifteenth century, vowed to the virgin Mary that he would offer at her altar a candle as big as the mast of a ship, if she sent him safe home ; but being asked, by one that heard him make the vow, how he could pretend to perform it, he answered, that if he got safe on shore the good-natured virgin would be contented with a farthing candle. I remember to have heard a devout Papist say that he was provoked to indignation once, that he had been at sea on board a Portugueze ship, to see the sailors throw several loaves of bread and bottles of wine into the sea by way of offerings or vows to their patron saint ; and that to justify their conduct, they affirmed that all that bread and wine would be carried safe by the saint, to some friars that lived in an island at some distance from them. All this mummary is the natural result of the spirit of Popery. For, as it is not to be doubted that some of the best and wisest among the heathens, disapproved the scandalous excesses committed on the occasion, and at the places of public worship, yet as they naturally sprung up out of their religion, no effectual remedy could be applied whilst the public idolatory and worship continued in force, so we are not to doubt that a great many Papists, disapprove and condemn the abuses that prevail in their church ; yet, as they are the natural effects of their religion, they can never be remedied or redressed till the popular worship is entirely

reformed, and the names of those Popish deities or saints totally cancelled out of the rubrics of religion.

The devotion that the heathens had for their gods, was so heteroclite that they often treated with the greatest indignity, those for whom they otherwise had the greatest veneration. Thus Lactantius tells us that, when the inhabitants of a certain village in the island of Rhodes, celebrated the feast of their patron god Hercules, they vied with each other to see who could utter the most opprobrious names and the most dire execrations against him; and that, if any one chanced to drop a good word, the whole mystery was marred. Thus the mother of all the gods was sometimes treated with such obscenity as would make even an immodest woman blush.

This custom has also been introduced into the church of Rome. The virgin Mary is honoured as the mother of God; and yet she is reviled and blasphemed in Spain and Italy in a manner that cannot bear repetition. This is attested by Belarmin who says.\* *Inter Catholicos quantus est eorum numerus qui matrem Domini virginem esse fatentur, et blasphemando meretricem appellare non timent.*

Arnobius in his book *Contra gentes*, reproaches the heathens with making artizans and tradesmen of their gods. Thus one was a shepherd, another a cow-herd, another a smith, another a fiddler, another a fencing-master, and so on. Accordingly as every god had a favourite profession, so every profession had a patron god. Thus poets and orators invoked Apollo, Minerva, and the Muses; physicians, Esculapius; soldiers, Mars; smiths, Vulcan; midwives, Lucina or Ilidthya; fox-hunters, Diana; and so with the rest. All this is but mere theatrical buffoonery as St. Austin calls it,

\* In tract. de arte bene moriendi.



and yet it has been exactly copied by the church of Rome. Men of letters invoke Catherine and Pope Gregory, Thomas of Aquin is the angel of the schools and patron of divines; physicians invoke Cosmas and Damianas; St. Luke is a painter and therefore the protector or patron of painters; St. Eustace, is a fox-hunter; St. Nicholas, a sailor; St. Margaret, a midwife; St. Cecilia, a fiddler or harper; St. Urban, a common labourer; St. Anthony, a swine-herd; St. Crispin, a shoe-maker; St. Gutman, a tailor; St. Leonard, a locksmith.—The angels preside over the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, &c. St. Barbara directs the thunder.

The heathens ascribed to each god a power of curing some particular distemper. Apollo cured the plague; Hercules, the falling-sickness; Juno or Lucina, the pains of child-birth; and so on. The saints of the church of Rome have their respective virtues and powers in like manner, for which they are invoked, as occasion requires. St. Sebastian and St. Roch, cure the plague; St. Petronilla, the fever; St. Apollonia, the tooth-ach; St. Otilia, sore eyes; St. Romanus, demoniacs; St. Valentine, the falling sickness, &c. &c.

Every kingdom, city, and village belonging to the heathens, was under the protection of some tutelar god. Accordingly, as often as the old Romans besieged any city, they would conjure away the patron-god by certain verses, in order that he might abandon the place; for which reason the besieged used to tie a chain about the neck of the statue of their god, for fear he should leave them, and withdraw his protection. Bel was the protector or patron-god of the Babylonians, Osiris and Isis were the patrons of Egypt; Apollo, of Rhodes and Delphos; Jupiter, Capitulinus; Mars, and Quirinus, of Rome; Diana, of Ephesus; Minerva, of Athens; Jupiter, of Crete or Candia; Venus,

of Cyprus, &c. The same is practised in the church of Rome. Michael and Dennis are the protectors of France; St. James is the patron of Spain; Martin and Boniface, of Germany; Patrick, of Ireland; George, of England; Andrew, of Scotland; David, of Wales; Sebastian, of Portugal; Stanislaus, of Poland; Nicholas, of Muscovy; Wenceslaus, of Bohemia; Mary, of Hungary; Wolfgangius, of Bavaria, &c. And as to the cities, the virgin Mary is the protectress of almost all. St. Peter and St. Paul are the patrons of Rome; Thomas of Aquin, of Naples; St. Mark, of Venice; St. Genovefa, of Paris; St. Norbertus, of Antwerp, &c. Nay, there are saints honoured by some, and utterly disavowed and execrated by others; for instance, Pope Gregory the seventh, and several other Romish saints that are kicked out of the French breviaries.

Minutius Felix reproaches the heathens for representing their gods as employed in the vilest offices. Thus Hercules is represented turning dung out of stables; Apollo is cow-herd to Ametas; Neptune is hired by Laomedon to build the walls of Troy, &c. The popish saints are employed, in like manner, for mean and even scandalous purposes. Thus the virgin Mary is represented to have come down from heaven to support a high-way robber that hung on a gibbet, because he had an extraordinary devotion for her. Another time, she comes down to stitch St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury's gown which was ripped on the shoulders. Another time, she assists certain monks\* to wipe the sweat off their faces while they are at work. Another time, she supplies the place of a devout mother-abbess, who went off with a friar to perform her devotions in disguise. Another time, she sings mattins for a friar who begged of her to supply his

\* Monachi Claravallenses.

place. And another time, she comes down from heaven to breathe a vein in a young man's arm, who had an extraordinary devotion for her\*.

It was usual with the old heathens to offer cakes as well as other things in honour of their gods and goddesses. Accordingly, the Collyridian heretics who were originally bred heathens, introduced their inveterate custom into the christian religion, and offered a cake to the virgin Mary as queen of heaven, for which they were condemned by St. Epiphanius, who loudly exclaimed against the worship of saints and images then springing up in the church. This Ethnico-heretical practice is renewed and continued in the church of Rome. For, in all the masses appointed and said *pro Beata* and other saints, they sacrifice or offer a wafer-cake in their honour.

They indeed pretend it is not a cake they offer or sacrifice, but the body of Christ into which they convert that cake by the words of consecration; and that it is to God himself they offer the sacrifice, and not to the virgin, or any other saint, to whom they pay only an inferior or relative honour, which is ultimately centered in God. To this I shall only say at present, that when I come to the article of Transubstantiation, I shall demonstratively prove, that it is no less a wafer-cake after consecration than it was before. As to the second clause, it is an illusory evasion that has been worn out thread-bare by the old heathens. For we have seen already, that they condemned such as would worship one god only, and that the worship they paid to inferior deities was ultimately referred to, and centered in the supreme God. How then can they pretend to justify themselves from the im-

\* All these and a thousand other splendid miracles, said to have been wrought by the mother of God, are avowed by the Romanists and recorded in their books.



putation of the Collyridian heresy? Certainly it is only by a pretended difference of intention; for the difference of leavened and unleavened bread, of languages, gestures, ceremonies, &c. makes no essential alteration in the case, as a mass said by a Maronite or Greek is confessedly the same in substance with a mass said by a Roman, though with other ceremonies, language, &c. Now as the question about the difference of the intention of the Collyridians and Romanists is a matter of personal fact, and therefore can never be infallibly known without a special revelation, it cannot be determined but by historical evidence, and by reasonable presumptions and deductions. This is all that any reasonable man can expect in such a case; but all this, as we have seen before, conspires to prove that the intention of the Collyridians was the same with that of the Romanists in the case before us. Therefore all those who say mass *pro Beata*, or any other saint, must be as arrant heretics as ever the Collyridians were.

Having thus proved the conformity of the Popish worship of angels and saints with the heathen worship of gods and goddesses, I shall answer two objections that the Romanists make in justification of their practice. 1. They say it was only devils or evil spirits that were worshipped by the heathens; and 2. They allege the examples of some great and holy men, who are said in Scripture to have worshipped and prayed to angels and saints.

As to the first though they endeavour to support it with Scripture authority, I must say, that either they are trifling with people, or they are strangers to the doctrine of the heathens, and the meaning of Scripture upon this head. That the heathens believed there were malignant demons or evil spirits, otherwise called devils, is certain; but it is equally certain, that they believed there were,

and accordingly they worshipped, *good* demons. The notion the heathens in general entertained of demons, was (as we have seen already, and may be further seen in Hesiod and others) much the same with our notion of angels and human souls; so that out of both classes of demons, viz. those that had never been incumbered with a body, and those that had guardians, were appointed unto men. And it was the opinion of some of the heathens, that human souls were not of so exalted a nature and condition as the other class of demons; for Plato says, that noble warriors dying in the field of battle, and all good men, became *holy* and terrestrial demons, averters of evil, and guardians of mankind. Plutarch says, in his life of Numa Pompilius, that Atis, Herodotus, Endymion, and a thousand other demons, were, by past ages, looked upon as saints that were beatified and beloved of the gods. It was in Greece that canonized or deified souls, &c. were first called demons; for the Greek word *daimones* originally signified gods, spirits, genii, &c. When St. Paul preached at Athens,\* he was charged with being a setter-forth of strange demons, i. e. gods; because he preached Jesus, and the resurrection. Surely it cannot be said, that the Philosophers who opposed St. Paul, considered Jesus and the resurrection, in the light of evil spirits or devils? They certainly did not, as there was nothing in St. Paul's preaching that could raise the idea of a malignant or evil spirit. And though they called the resurrection a demon or a god, yet this is not to be wondered at, considering what the heathen theology was; for, among the heathens, all, even the virtues and vices were realized, demonised, or deified: and the same style is used in all languages to this day, though perhaps we make no attention to it. Accordingly

\*Acts xvii. 18.

we are apt to say, the spirit of love, the spirit of hatred, the spirit of pride, &c. &c. which is the same thing as if we said the demon of charity, the demon of hatred, &c. One of the dialogists, in Plutarch's *Amatorius*, asked a question that was not answered, viz. How came love to be deified? He might as well have asked, how came nine months of the year to be deified or realized into nine goddesses called Muses? How the other three months were realized into, charities or graces? How the hours, the smiles, the laughs, the jokes, the joys, &c. were all realized and deified, and supposed, even by our christian poets, to inhabit the isle of Cyprus, and to attend the goddess Venus in all her intrigues and marches.

St. Paul \* and St. John † say that Christians will in the latter times, depart from the faith giving heed to the doctrines of demons, forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from meats, and worshipping idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. Now it is certain that christians never worshipped evil spirits or devils. Therefore the demons, spoken of here, are the angels and saints that are worshipped by christians; and consequently the word demon, even among the sacred writers, did not always signify an evil spirit or devil.

St. Epiphanius says, that St. Paul's prophecy, as aforesaid, was fulfilled upon the Collyridians inasmuch as by their offering a cake to the Virgin Mary, they gave heed to, and revived, the doctrine of worshipping demons. Now it is certain, that neither Epiphanius nor the Collyridians considered the virgin as an evil spirit or devil. Therefore it is incontestible, that the word *daimones*, *daimonia*, or demons, formerly signified not only evil spirits or devils, but also gods and goddesses deified men and women, &c.

\* 1 Tim. 4.

† Rev. 9.



In confirmation of what I have hitherto advanced, I shall show, by pointing out the origin and rise of idolatory, that it was not devils, but canonized or deified men and women, &c. that were worshipped by the heathens.

Adam and Eve, as we learn from Scripture, were no sooner created than endued with the gift of language; but while there were but few in the world, there was no immediate necessity for any kind of writing; Adam, therefore, and his posterity were left to discover the use of it by their own experience. According as the children of Adam began to multiply, the use of some kind of writing became necessary; the most compendious therefore, and the most natural was what they must have first hit upon: and certainly nothing more so than that which consists in an analogy of name or nature; hence the symbolic writing was invented. This was the only writing known in the world, until after the dispersion of the children of Noah. We find it in their several migrations all over the globe. There was no other in use in America when the Spaniards first landed there; for, it was in paint that advice of that invasion was sent to Montezuma, the emperor of Mexico. There are some countries still where no other is in use. The same, notwithstanding all our alphabets, is more or less in use among us to this day in our standards, flags, signs, paintings, carvings, &c.

In process of time, this symbolic writing was so improved, that it was fitted to all the purposes of religious and civil instruction, and government. At last the multiplicity of those characters or symbols and the arbitrary complication of them occasioned an endless perplexity. Here people began to reflect, that, as the different articulations of the voice are but few, if sound were embodied and painted as well as thought, it would remedy the

inconveniencies arising from the luxuriance of analogy. Hence the alphabetic writing was struck out, a scheme, indeed, more perfect, though less natural than the other. But according as this prevailed, the original meaning of that was forgotten.

As the ceremonial of religion is that which most affects the multitude, and therefore cannot be reformed without dangerous consequences, and as mankind are naturally fond of mystical pageantry, the symbols were continued in the places of public worship as usual. The people, now ignorant of the primitive intention of those emblems of the sun, moon, and stars, men, women, &c. began, every one according to his own caprice and fancy, to form new systems and conjectures. At last they concluded that their adorations were primitively directed to the objects which the symbols immediately represented to the eye. It is natural then to think that the first symbol they misinterpreted was that of the sun which was the symbol of God, and the most distinguished of all. As they had their eyes fixed upon the symbol of the sun in their public acts of worship, and their minds upon the sun itself, forgetting that they ought to go farther, they ascribed all the great titles of God and directed their thanks, to that star of the day. God was no sooner thus confounded with his own work, but a door was opened to all the extravagances of human imagination. The second mistake they committed, was confounding a dead man with God and the sun, or rather supposing that some man or other must have been deified and translated into the sun, and there worshipped,—For, as the symbol of the sun exhibited the figure of a man's face, as it does to this day, they concluded that it imported what I have said. All the rest of the symbols took their turn and were

interpreted, in the same arbitrary manner. And as the symbols were multiplied and carried from one country to another, the persons supposed to have been deified were multiplied accordingly; for every country had an equal right to think it was some of their own ancestors, some of their kings and queens, heroes, and heroines, &c. that had been deified and translated into the places pointed to by the symbols respectively.

Nor does it make any thing against my assertion to say, that in the time of Abraham several of the eastern nations were infected with idolatry when, at the same time, the Egyptian king and his court and priests professed the religion of Noah; for, it was the rabble or the multitude that first fell into idolatry. The priests and other men of sense overlooked the matter, for a series of time, either through fear or upon principles of policy. And, though they fell into it themselves at last, yet the notion of one supreme God was never utterly extinguished, as we find by their notion of Jupiter, and *Deus optimas maximus*, and by the notion that prevails even among the savage hottentots to this day. When the symbols and allegorical representations used for the purposes of religion, were no longer understood but by the priests, the former were called hieroglyphics, and the latter mysteries, where the primitive truths also were preserved for many ages, though lost, at last, in a sink of prostitution and corruption.

Thus an universal idolatry was introduced and supported under various pretences. Thus the heavens, the earth, and the whole universe, were peopled with deified men and women, good and evil spirits, genii, and other imaginary beings, struck out upon the mistaken meaning of the characters of the symbolic writing, and multiplied according to the various aspects and relations of



those characters. And thus the foundation was laid for the machinery, not only of the angels and saints that are worshipped in the church of Rome, but also of the fairies, hobgoblins, apparitions of horned and cloven footed spirits, little airy robbers, &c. that have no existence, but in the imaginations of the vulgar.

As to the other argument the Romanists allege, in their own justification, viz. the examples of some great men that are said in Scripture to have prayed to, and worshipped, angels and saints, I must observe.

1st. That there is a wide difference between honouring such as are present to our senses, and honouring such as are absent, the former is a civil honour or worship, the latter a religious one.

2d. That the Scripture, as I shall show hereafter abounds with allegories and figurative expressions. For instance, St. Paul says, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, in earth, and under the earth. This is only a figurative expression. All that he meant by it was, that Jesus Christ was exalted so high that the whole universe must acknowledge him to be true God and true man; otherwise how could the beings in heaven and under the earth, bow or kneel, whereas they have neither heads, nor knees, nor body at all?

3d. That it was our Saviour that was called an angel by Malachy, Isaias and others. There are several passages in Moses where an angel is said to have appeared, spoke, &c. tho' it is evident from the context that it was God himself that appeared, spoke, &c. for instance, Exod. 3. 2. it is said that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and yet it is said in verse 4, 5, 6, &c. that it was God himself that appeared. The Romanists themselves say, that the

three men that appeared to Abraham, two of which are afterwards called angels, were the three persons of the Trinity. What wonder then that he should be prayed to and worshipped as often as he appeared to mankind? Was not our Saviour an angel or messenger when he came in the flesh to announce the will of his father to men? What wonder that he should be called an angel, and worshipped as often as he appeared in the old law? When St. Paul ordered the women to wear the power or the veil on their heads, when their husbands sent their angels or messengers to inspect into their conduct at their female meetings, he certainly did not exclude the veil when the husbands were their own messengers or angels. This leads me to observe,

4thly. That the name of God's angel, and archangel, are by a figure of speech, often applied in scripture to men. As to the two former, there can be no dispute. Nay, the word angel very often signifies only a meteor, or any other matter that God pleases to make use of, for some visible purpose. And, as to the word archangel, when restrained to, and understood of, an angel called Michael,\* it does not any where in the whole scripture signify a spiritual being; for, in St. Jude who plainly refers to the third chapter of Zachary, and the tenth and twelfth chapters of Daniel, it

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\* This word signifies one, as or like, God, i. e. a prince; for as all bishops in the christian church are called princes, so are all high-priests in every religion called princes, or men as God, or God's vicegerents and representatives. As St. John, in his revelation, foretells what was to happen in the latter times in the church of Christ, it would be absurd to say, that he meant that battle which is said to have been fought between the angels in heaven before Adam was created. The battle St. John speaks of, was no more fought in heaven, than the woman, clothed with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars, was in heaven. All these things refer to the state of the church militant here on earth,

signifies only a high priest of the old law contending for the Jewish church, called the body of Moses, as the Christian church is called the body of Christ. And in St. John's revelation, it only signifies another high priest in the new law, contending for the church of Christ.

Lastly. I must observe, that if any of those holy men carried their devotion beyond the bounds of reason and religion, their conduct is no maxim; we are not to look upon them as impeccable. The patriarchs committed several faults. David was, by his name, the beloved; yet he committed flagrant faults. Solomon was peace and wisdom; yet, after all his inspirations, he fell into idolatry, nor do we find that he ever recovered from it. If any in the new law were impeccable, surely Peter and Paul must have been so; yet St. Peter's faults are recorded with a witness; and St. Paul says,\* that he kept a constant guard upon himself, lest, while he preached to others, he should be a cast-away himself. Hence, it is plain, that every action recorded in Scripture, is not a rule of conduct. The people of Melita were wrong, when they said,† that St. Paul was a God; yet they are no where in Scripture censured for it.

But further, how is it possible that angels or saints could hear or know our masses without knowing the secrets of hearts, the principal and only true seat of our prayers? Suppose several people, in several distant parts of the earth, praying all at once to some particular angel or saint, he must be present to their prayers every where, at the same time, and then he must be a god, as none but God can be present in several distant places at once; or he must read the secrets of their hearts at a distance, and then he must be a god, as none but God can, according to the first

\* 1 Cor. 9.

† Acts 28.



chapter of the Book of Wisdom, and the eighth chapter of the first Book of Kings, know the secrets of hearts ; or, if God must, and does reveal those prayers to him, then God must be conceived to say, “ Such people upon earth, are praying to you for such a purpose ; if you pray and intercede for them, and require me to grant their petitions, I will, if I think fit.” But what is all this but such another theatrical farce as was acted upon the old heathen stage ?

To conclude this article, I shall only observe, that the practice of worshipping or praying to angels or saints, is so far from being justifiable by any Scripture authority, that it was condemned when first it appeared in the Christian church. So true it is, that mankind cannot be, without very great difficulty, brought off and weaned from inveterate habits, and that men are apt to carry their early prejudices along with them, even in their transitions, from one religion to another. Accordingly we find, that the Colossians, and other Gentile converts, though they renounced their gods upon their conversion to Christianity, yet, retained the substance of their former mode of worship, and only changed the object by transferring it to angels. As soon as St. Paul was informed of this he wrote to that people, to caution them against their old philosophy, and vain traditions and customs. And, among the rest, he condemned the worshipping of angels, in these words,\* “ Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things he hath not seen.” And St. John, in the 19th and 22d chapters of his revelation, plainly alludes to this practice as then springing up in the church ; and takes occasion to condemn it, and to shew, in an allegorical manner, that God only

\* Col. 2, 18.

is to be worshipped. I say in an allegorical manner; for if, in fact, an angel appeared to St. John it would have been no fault at all to bow to him, as he was present to his senses; for then it would have been only a civil honour or worship; how then could the angel reprove him for it? Or, if it was a fault, how could St. John have been guilty of it a second time? To say, as the Romanists do, that St. John being an apostle, evangelist and prophet, was greater and more reputable than an angel, is confounding common notions. A poor, mortal creature more respectable than the angel of God! This is mere priest-craft. The lord lieutenant certainly is more respectable than any the most eminent person in the kingdom, where he appears in that character; and, by the same rule, that angel, as being God's lieutenant and representative, would have been more respectable than all the men upon earth.

This worship then being thus condemned by the apostles, it may seem strange how it should gain ground, and spread so wide afterwards as it did; but there are several reasons for it. The bulk of the primitive christians consisted of heathen converts who were still, in a great measure, bigotted to their old prejudices. Those prejudices were strengthened by the fondness the generality of mankind naturally have for pageantry and superstition; and all this was seconded by the ill-judged condescension and mistaken zeal of too many of the primitive missionaries and preachers. We have a like instance in the conduct of the missionaries in China, where the christians were countenanced in the worship of Confucius. Thus Clement of Alexandria, in order to soften the prejudice of the heathens against the christians, and the better to gain upon them to embrace the christian religion, transferred the terms, rites, ceremonies, &c. of

the heathen mysteries to christian purposes. He calls those new rites, 'truly holy mysteries, the orgia of the word, the bacchanalia of the christians,' &c. and says, that the Lord himself is the hierophant.

Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais\*, A. D. 410, speaks thus: "Philosophy, when it has attained the truth, allows the use of lies and fictions. As darkness is most proper and commodious for those who have weak eyes, so I hold that lies and fictions are useful to the people; and that truth would be hurtful to those who are not able to bear its light and splendour." And he promises, if the laws of the church would dispense with it, that he would philosophize at home, and talk abroad in the common strain, preaching up the general and received fables.

Eusebius tells us, in the life of Constantine the great, that that emperor, in order to render the christian religion the more plausible to the heathens, adopted their ornaments, ceremonies, &c.

Now this indiscreet zeal for making proselytes, and the indulgence allowed afterwards to such proselytes in order to keep them fast, had such bad effects, that when a reformation was proposed, it was too late. The people would not part with what they had been so long indulged in, and accustomed to. An instance of which we have in a case of infinite less consequence to flesh and blood than religious pomp and pageantry, viz. the attempt that was made to substitute St. Jerom's version of the psalms in the room of the paltry version that was used in the churches 'till then. This occasioned such an insurrection among the people, that several bishops had like to have been stoned to death for it. Another dreadful consequence attended the introduction of the pagan rites and ce-

\* A town of Phenicia, now a province of Turkey.



remonies into the christian religion. As the heathens were conscious of the abominations and excesses that were committed in their mysteries and religious assemblies, they thought the same, or worse licentiousness must have been practised among the christians. For, as the christians affected to call their feasts and mysteries Bacchanalia, or Bacchanal revels, the Orgia\* of Christ, they thought that our Saviour's pudendum must have been carried in procession among them as the pudendum of Bacchus or Osiris was among themselves; and consequently that their assemblies must have been a sink of prostitution and promiscuous mixtures. Nor was this charge entirely without foundation; for we shall see hereafter what scandalous irregularities were committed even in the apostles' time on occasion of the love feasts.

But when the fathers found it was in vain for them to pretend to stem the torrent of popular prejudices, they set themselves to work another way. The credit and honour of their religion required them to palliate what they could not otherwise reform. The chief point was, to blot the memory of the heathen gods out of the minds of the people. To effect which, they industriously represented those gods as so many devils, and preached up the worshipping of angels and saints in their stead. Nothing could succeed better with the ignorant people than such a representation, especially as they were indulged in the substance of their former worship, and only the objects changed.

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\* This word signifies the antient rural feasts that were primitively designed to commemorate the loss of fecundity, and the wants and necessities of mankind after the flood. They were called the feasts of Bacchus or Osiris, because his Pudendum, signified by that word, was carried in procession in these feasts to symbolize the above loss.

Hence it is that, though the christians in Tertulian's time abhorred every rite and ceremony that was practised in the heathen temples, yet from the third century forth, we find those rites and ceremonies prevail almost every where. Accordingly Theodoret says, "If the poet Hesiod hath called good men after their decease, the deliverers and guardians of mortal men, and the best of philosophers, Plato hath confirmed the poet's saying, and asserted, that we ought to honour their sepulchres, why, says he to the heathens, do you blame the things that are done by us? For such as were as illustrious for piety, and for the sake thereof received martyrdom, we also name deliverers and physicians, not calling them demons,\* but friends and sincere servants of God. Our Lord hath brought his dead into the place of your gods whom he has abolished and hath given their honour to the martyrs. For, instead of the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus, are now celebrated the festivals of Peter and Paul. &c." Accordingly, we find that pope Gregory I. in his directions to Austin the monk at Canterbury orders to spare the temples of the gods, to sprinkle them with holy water, and thus to divert them from the service of devils (an odious name he designedly gives the heathen gods) to the service of the true god, and the holy martyrs. But, as the people were wont to offer sacrifices in their

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\* Here we may see how Theodoret approved of Hesiod's and Plato's notions, and only found fault with the names they gave to their deified men. As the meanings of words are arbitrary, at least in their first institution, the exception he makes is frivolous and silly, and argues either ignorance or insincerity. He confirms the observation I have already made of the industry made use of to persuade the people, that all the demons of the heathens were evil spirits. Upon the whole it is plain, there was no difference between Theodoret's doctrine, and that of the heathens but in the names.

temples, he allows them to make tents of the branches of trees round the temples, and there to celebrate the days appointed by religious banquets, and other exterior rejoicings, that they might be the more induced to frequent the places of public worship as usual. Here then we see how and why the heathen worship has been introduced into the christian religion, and only the gods of the christians substituted for the gods of the heathens.

The only palliative they have for this mode of worship, is what we have seen already with the heathens, and such another as Plato makes use of to justify a scandalous, diabolical custom that prevailed among them, and was authorised by Lycurgus's laws, for young men and women to dance naked in the public exercises, and at their solemn festivals and sacrifices. He says, that virtue would be to them instead of clothing, that it would quicken their virtue, and keep them constantly in mind of it. This is the very spirit of the gloss the Romanists put upon their worship of angels and saints. But, as I have sufficiently demonstrated the conformity of popery with paganism in this point, I shall proceed to another that has an immediate connexion with the first occasion of idolatry, viz. the doctrine of

### PURGATORY.

By tracing up this doctrine to its source, I shall at once show that it is of heathenish extraction, and that in all probability Egypt was the cradle of idolatry.

There was but one religion in the world, one only God worshipped, from the creation until after the deluge. People had all along a notion of two future states. But, as to a third, it was not so much as dreamt of till after the birth of idolatry. It



was with purgatory as with the rest of the gross errors of the heathen world, they took their first rise from the abuse and mistaken meaning of the rules and customs of the ancient Egyptians.

There was near each of the Egyptian towns, a certain ground appointed for a common burial-place.\* That near Memphis, lay on the other side of a lake in a beautiful plain embellished with brooks, groves and other rural ornaments. When any one died in or about that town, his corpse was brought to the shore of the lake, and set before a tribunal of judges appointed to examine into his conduct. If he had not paid his debts, his body was delivered to his creditors to oblige his friends to release it. If he had not faithfully observed the laws, his body was thrown into a pit that was sunk behind the judgment-seat. But when no accuser appeared, or the accuser was convicted of falsehood, his panegyrick was made and all the assistants applauded what was said in his praise; and congratulated him on his going to enjoy an eternal repose with the virtuous. There was on the shore of the lake a severe ferry-man, who with the consent of the judges, but never without it, received the corpse into his boat and transported it across the lake, to the above-mentioned burial-place where it was interred. At the entrance of it was placed the symbol of a dog with three pair of jaws, and the ceremony of interment was ended by thrice sprinkling sand over the apperture of the vault, and thrice bidding the deceased adieu.

As all things in those days, were characterized by symbolical names and signs, this burial-place was called *ngelitsouth*, *elizouth*, or *elixium* i. e. a place of joy and rest, in allusion not only to the joy caused among his friends by his being honourably acquitted by the judges, but also, to the

\* V L'hist. du Ciel Poétique, Vol. I.

eternal repose they believed, he was translated into upon his decease. The lake was called *acheron* or *acherusia*, to signify the last state or condition of man. The ferry-man was called Charon, to signify that he was inflexible to bribery and corruption. The dog was called Cerberus, to signify the three funeral cries over the grave, which is the meaning of that word. They called the pit Tartar, to signify, not only the repeated cries and lamentations of the people over the dead that were thrown into it, but also the perpetual torments and miseries of the wicked in the other world; all which was symbolized by the double warning implied in the word Tartar, joined to the leaking vessel into which they incessantly poured Nile-water, and the frightful representations and emblems exhibited round the pit, and calculated to express endless torture and remorse; as that of a man tied on a wheel always in motion; another whose heart was the prey of a vulture; and a third rolling a stone up a hill with fruitless toil. But when the public indictions or instructive symbols were realized into so many divinities and spiritual beings, as was already observed, those two burial-places were realized in like manner into two different states of souls, in regions under ground, corresponding with the respective characters of those places. Hereupon systems were multiplied, and those subterraneous regions variously understood and as variously characterised. They were called by several names as Elizium, Tartarus, Hades, Gehenna, Barathrum, Cocythus, Styx, Acheron, Pyriphlegethon, &c.

Some of the heathens divided those regions into three\* different districts, the first for such as were

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\* In some popish countries Purgatory itself is divided into eight different districts; the highest, where the fire is most intense, is for crowned heads; the lowest, where the fire is most remiss, for the poor. It is believed that by the suffrages of the living,

doomed to eternal punishments ; the second, for such as were guilty of lesser or venial faults, for which they were to be punished only for a certain time ; and the third, a place of reward and happiness. Thus Plato, in his *Gorgias* and *Phædo* ; whose notion of those subterraneous regions has been adopted by Virgil, who, in the sixth book of his *Æneis*, first gives an account of the flagellations, howlings and eternal miseries of the wicked in Tartarus or hell, and then\* describes the several kinds of punishments that souls undergo in the second region, before they are admitted into the elysium or habitation of joy and repose.

Others have divided those subterraneous regions into two districts only ; but, as Elysium of old signified joy, they represented it as a mixed state of joy and misery. Thus though Homer represents Elysium as a blisful region, yet he introduces Achilles telling Ulysses there, that he had rather be a rustic on earth, serving a poor man for hire, than have a large empire over all the dead. But they all agreed there was a purgatory, or place of temporal punishments above or below the surface of the earth. Thus Socrates, in the discourse he had with his friends the last day of his life, as recorded in Plato's *Phædo*, says, "that some souls shall, after their departure from the body, hover about sepulchres there to be punished," &c. and, again, "that some after having gone through various punishments shall be purged and absolved; and after certain periods shall be freed from their punishments ; but those who by reason of the greatness of their sins, who have committed sacri-

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those souls may be removed from one district to another. Accordingly, such as suspect, or are told, that their friends are among the beggars, or in too mean a place pay high that they may be removed to a more honourable situation.



leges, murders, and other crimes of the like nature shall be thrown into Tartarus, from whence they never shall escape." And Plato says, in his tenth book of laws, that "those who have been guilty of smaller sins do not sink so deep as others, but wander about near the surface of the region," &c.

It was usual with the heathens, to offer prayers and sacrifices for the relief of the souls detained in the middle state or purgatory. Thus Virgil tells us, that the ghost of Palinurus appeared to Æneas, begging of him to help to alleviate his misery; whereupon he is assured by the Sybil,\* that solemn sacrifices should be offered to placate his *manes*. Plutarch tells us†, that the oracle of Apollo had ordered propitiations to be made for the dead; and honours to be rendered to them. And we learn by these words of Ovid: *Ossa quieta precor tuta requiescite in urna*, that *requiescat in pace*, and such other expressions were in use among the heathens.

They had likewise a custom among them, of sprinkling the coffin and the people present with holy-water. Thus Virgil says‡, that Chorineus sprinkled the people that assisted at the burial of Misenus. And Ovid tells us§, that Juno at her return from hell, was sprinkled by Iris before she went into heaven.

Now let any man compare the popish purgatory with that of the heathens, and he will plainly see, not only a conformity, but a surprising uniformity between both. It is apparent, that pope Gregory the first, has, in his dialogues, copied his notion of purgatory from Virgil. For he says, that some souls are purged in the air, others in the water, others in the smoke of baths, &c. But it was only

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\* Æneid. lib. 6. v. 379.

† Consol. ad uxorem; oper. tom. 2. p. 612. edit. Xyl.

‡ Æneid. lib. 6. v. 230.

§ Metam. lib. 4. v. 480.

by slow degrees, that this heathen doctrine got footing and prevailed in the church. Though it was received in some places sooner, in others later yet we cannot find that it was ever believed by any christian, for at least three hundred years after Christ. For as Minutius Felix, a Roman lawyer and christian, who lived about two hundred years after Christ, says, in his Octavius, that his religion was pure, simple and divine, as it had no temples, altars, images, sacrifices, incense, or the like, how can any Romanist pretend, that purgatory was admitted where those other popish and heathen doctrines and practices were excluded? Nay, it will sufficiently appear, by the confessions of the Romanists themselves, that the doctrine of purgatory got no certain footing among christians, until the church of Rome fancied she had the power of indulgences granted to her in the power of the keys, for the establishment of which the notion of purgatory was adopted, as the most plausible argument that could be devised.

Cardinal Cajetan says, "if we could have any certainty concerning the original of indulgences, it would help us much in the disquisition of the truth of purgatory; but we have not, by writing, any authority, either of the holy Scriptures, or ancient doctors, Greek or Latin, that affordeth us the least knowledge thereof."

Fisher, bishop of Rochester, has these remarkable words; "Many are tempted not to rely much upon indulgences for this consideration, that the use of them appears to be new, and very lately known among christians. To which I answer, it is not very certain who was the first author of them, The doctrine of Purgatory was rarely, if at all, heard of among the ancients; and to this very day the Greeks believe it not. Nor was the belief either of Purgatory or Indulgences so necessary in the

primitive church as it is now. So long as men were unconcerned about purgatory, nobody inquired after indulgences. Take away purgatory, and there is no more need of indulgences. Seeing therefore that purgatory was so lately known and received in the church, who will wonder that in the first ages indulgences were not made use of?"

The same Fisher says in another place, "There is not one text of scripture that can force any man to believe a purgatory ; or, if there be, it has hitherto escaped the most diligent inquirers

Bellarmin owns, that purgatory cannot be proved from any passage in the Old Testament, except the Maccabees ; but no argument drawn from that book, even though it were canonical, could prove any thing in favour of purgatory, without proving two things ; 1st, That every action that is recorded in Scripture, and not expressly condemned, is lawful ; 2dly, That the Jews had not adopted any of the superstitious practises of the heathens. Now neither of these is true. As to the first, I have cleared it up already. As to the second, I believe no divine would stand forth to assert it. It is notorious, that the Jews were from their first establishment extremely addicted to idolatry, like the rest of the posterity of Noah. And though they were not so perverse after the captivity of Babylon as before, yet they were half heathen even in our Saviour's time.

The heathens had a custom of repeating and telling the same prayers over and over without intermission, thinking that arithmetic was sufficient to give them weight and efficacy. Thus, the priests of Baal\* cried from morning until noon, O Baal hear us ! O Baal hear us ! Tertulian witnesses the same as practised by the heathens in his time. *Agmine verborum*, says he, *Deum adeundum putant*. And we find by ancient medals, and other monu-

\* 1 Kings xviii. 26.



ments that they reckoned their prayers upon beads.\* Now that this superstitious custom had prevailed among the Jews, is plain from the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, where our Saviour warns his disciples against the vain repetitions and much speaking of the heathens. This is sufficient to show, that the Jews had borrowed many idolatrous and superstitious customs from the heathens, among which was that of praying for the dead, as we find in the second book of the Maccabees, though it is disputed by some, whether purgatory be alluded to there at all, as the people there supposed to have been prayed for, died under the guilt of idolatry.

The same Bellarmin confesses, that, according to the rules of logic, the doctrine of purgatory cannot be proved from the 12th of Matthew, where it is said, that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven in this world, nor in that which is to come; which manner of speaking indeed signified no more among the Jews but that a thing should never be done, or not without great difficulty.

The Jesuit Maldonat owns, that it cannot be proved from the prison spoken of in the 5th of Matthew, where it is said, that none shall get out without paying the last farthing.

Peter Soto allows it cannot be proved from St. Paul's words to the Corinthians†, where he says, that such a one will be saved yet so as by fire. Nay they are so hard set, that one Cotton a Jesuit, as one of their own historians Mr. de Thou assures us, consulted a demoniac to know where in scripture the passage was whereby purgatory could be proved.

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\* As we cannot find that beads, were used by the christians before the days of Friar Dominick, it shows that the heathen customs were introduced, some later than others, into the church.

† 1. Cor. iii. 15.

As to the question when and by whom this heathen notion was first revived in the church, we cannot determine; however, it must have been after the days of Constantine the Great. It is natural to think, that, when that emperor began to introduce the heathen ornaments into the christian churches, the christians began to abate of the horror they had before, for the doctrines and practices of the heathens. Accordingly, being encouraged by his example, they began by degrees, every one according to his own taste and fancy, to adopt one point or other of the heathen discipline and practice. Hence it is, that we find the heathen corruptions sprouting up very fast in the church towards the end of the fourth century.

When popular prejudices rose too high for opposition, the safest and most plausible method to be taken was to palliate what could not be reformed, and endeavour to sanctify superstition by changing the object. Thus the heathen practice of praying for the dead took a new turn in several places.

The Greek and oriental churches never allowed a purgatory, as bishop Fisher and others confess; yet they had prayers for the dead, the occasion and meaning of which were as follows: In the primitive times, people were strangely divided about the nature of the human soul, and the state of souls in the other world. It was usual in Egypt and elsewhere to symbolize the miseries of the damned by racks, wheels, fire, and other frightful emblems. The old Jews adopted the same figures to characterize those miseries under the notions of a gnawing worm, consuming fire, &c. Our Saviour, the better to be understood, expressed himself in the received stile of his country, and emblemized hell by the fire of Gehenna, a valley near Jerusalem which had no more connexion with hell than Barathrum in Italy, or Tartar in Egypt,

or any other place upon the globe, only, because children had been burnt alive there formerly, in honor of Molock. Some of the primitive christians, taking his words to the letter, held that, as fire could not act upon a pure spirit, the soul must be partly material. Whereupon they adopted the scourgings, burnings, &c. of the hell of Orpheus, a thing every whit as ridiculous as the heaven of poets.

As to the state of the souls of the just, they were likewise divided. Some allowed that they were immediately, upon their departure from the body, admitted to the beatific vision. Others excluded all souls from thence till the day of judgment; but still they supposed them to be placed in paradise, wherever it be. Accordingly they used to pray for them, with a view to the resurrection of the flesh, that they might, soul and body, be soon translated to the beatific joys of heaven. This is the meaning of the prayers that were made by several of the ancients for the dead, and that are alluded to in the canon of the mass, where the priest prays for those who sleep in *somno pacis*, which certainly cannot be understood of purgatory, being, as they represent it, a place of torments, where souls are purged in flames of fire, and scourged, and punished even by the devils themselves. This is their notion of purgatory. For, though some in the beginning placed it in the winds, others in our domestic fires, &c. yet they agreed at last to place it in the regions below, between the surface of the earth and hell, and there adopted the scourgings, burnings, &c. of the hell of Orpheus, thereby turning it into as great a romance as Orpheus himself, who was originally nothing but the Egyptian Horous, or the symbol of industry lying on its back, while Egypt lay under water.



Upon the whole then, it is evident, that the doctrine of purgatory is of heathen original ; that the fire of it is, like the thunder of the Vatican, a harmless thing, which no wise man would be afraid of, were it not too often attended with church thunderbolts, persecutions and massacres ; and that it only serves to cheat the simple and ignorant, out of their money, by giving them bills of exchange upon the other world, for cash paid in this, without any danger of the bills returning protested.

The popish notion of purgatory has so close a connexion with the pretended power of the keys, supposed to be vested in the bishop of Rome, as St. Peter's successor, that the next thing here to be considered, is, the

### POPE'S SUPREMACY AND INFALLIBILITY

This supremacy is likewise of heathen original. The bishop of Rome is called Pope or great father, and so was Jupiter formerly among the Scythians, as may be seen in the fourth book of Herodotus.\* He is also called Summus Pontifex, and so were the chief priests among the old Romans, because the wooden-bridge Sublicius was first built, and afterwards often repaired by them. His supremacy is the same with theirs, as may be seen in several authors.

Dennis of Halicarnassus, in his life of Numa Pōmpilius, gives the following account of the supremacy of the heathen popes or Summi Pontifices :—

“They enjoy an uncontrollable jurisdiction in affairs of the highest nature ; for they judge all causes relating to the interests of religion. They make new laws of their own authority, when the

\* The Victimarii among the Romans were called Pope, Popes.

written law is deficient. They examine into the conduct of the priests, and in general, of all those that are employed to superintend the sacrifice and the other parts of the public worship. They keep all inferior ranks and orders of men to their duty, lest they may do any thing contrary to the established worship. They are also the interpreters and prophets whom the ignorant people consult in matters relating to the worship of God and the saints : and they punish the refractory at discretion, according as the case requires. But, as to themselves, they are not to be judged by any man. They are independent. They are not accountable to the senate or people, for what they do. And when one of them dies, he is succeeded by another who is elected, not by the people, but by the sacred college." If the reader is curious to see a farther account of the supremacy, and absolute authority of the heathen popes, he may consult Plutarch and Livy, where he will find the substance of what has been here quoted from Halicarnassus.

Now let any man compare the supremacy of the bishops of Rome, with that of the old Roman pontiffs, and he will plainly see that the one is but a copy of the other. The Romish canonists hold that the pope is not subject to any human law. That he cannot be judged neither by the emperor nor clergy ; neither by kings nor people. That it is an article of faith that he is supreme head of the church, and that all creatures are subject unto him. And that, as the sun is the lord of all the planets, he is the father of all powers, principalities, and dignities.

Platina tells us, in the life of Paul the second, that examinations being taken by that pope against him and some others, he begged of his holiness to remit the cognizance of the affair to their judges. Upon which the pope said with fury

in his looks: "What! How dare you speak to me of judges? Don't you know that I have all the law in my own breast? I say the word—I regard nobody; I am Pope; I can approve or disannul the judgments and sentences of others as I please."

Cardinal Baronius, in his remonstrance to the republic of Venice, asks them in this magisterial manner: "By what authority did you pretend to judge the judge of all mankind, whom no œcumenical council ever presumed to judge, as it is from him they derive their authority, so that without his approbation they cannot be deemed œcumenical or general, nor be convened, nor their canons have any force; whose usual cry is: 'The first see is judged of nobody,'"

Nay, the popes have carried matters much higher and defined that they are gods, and therefore cannot be judged by any power upon earth, as God cannot be judged of men. Thus, pope Nicholas the first, in his epistle to Michael the emperor at Constantinople, an. 865\* *Satis evidenter ostenditur a seculari protestate nec ligari prorsus nec solvi posse pontificem quem constat a pio principe Constantino deum appellatum: nec posse deum ab hominibus judicari manifestum est.* Whereupon *Augustinus, Stenchus, Bibliothecaire* of the *Vatican*, says: "You hear how the pope has been called God, looked upon as God by Constantine when he honoured him with his donation, and adored him as God, paying him all the divine honours he could." Who then will be surprised to hear that the heathen pontiffs and emperors affected to be called Gods?

The heathen pontiffs, as we learn from Livy, Plutarch, Baronius ad annum 44. and others, were equal in honour to crowned heads, they had

\* Decret. 1. dist. 96 cap. satis evidenter.



their guards about them, their ivory chairs and litters like the consuls. They alone had the privilege of riding to the capitol in a chariot. They presided over all colleges, augurs, priests and vestal virgins or nuns. They had the power of punishing and fining at discretion. It was their province to appoint in what temples, upon what altars, by what victims, and on what days the sacrifices were to be offered. They marked out the working days and holidays; when it was lawful to work, and when it was not. They instituted feasts, regulated the calendar, ordered embolisms, intercalations, &c. They confirmed the several orders of the clergy, as the Flamens, the Arch-Flamens, the Salians, the Luperii, the augurs, and the men and women that made vows of chastity. They had crosiers\* in their hands; sometimes an amict, sometimes a mitre, sometimes a gold crown on their heads; they wore albs, copes. They wore rings on their fingers, and, as Juvenal tells us,† had their heads shaved in the form of a crown, formerly called fenestella or little window, but now tonsura the tonsure, as is practised still in popish countries, contrary to the express law of God (made in Levit. 21. 5. and renewed in Ezechiel, 44. 20.) forbidding priests to shave their heads in a round form in imitation of the Egyptian priests who, as Apuleius, Herodotus, Pliny and Epiphanius tells us, had their heads shaved in that manner. That their heads were shaved in the form of a crown, appears from Rabbi Solomon who says the Hebrew word *Qarechath* in Leviticus signifies the crown of the head made bald by shaving or otherwise. They were carried in state through the city; they were clothed in purple and dispensed with from returning a salutation: and,

\* The lituus, as appears by ancient medals and other monuments was of the same form with a bishop's crosier, † Satire 6. v. 532.

which is more than all, they were exempt from the obligation of taking an oath in any court of Judicature; which, by the by, shows they were looked upon as infallible.

So great was the veneration and honour the heathens had for the supremacy of their sovereign pontiffs that the heathen emperors thought proper at last, to assume the title and unite both powers, the spiritual and temporal, in one. Thus, by ancient medals, coins, authentic letters, &c. we find the following titles; Julius Cæsar Summus Pontifex; Augustus Cæsar Summus Pontifex; Tiberius Summus Pontifex; and so on. The heathen emperors, become popes, affected to be called gods, thus Augustus is styled by Virgil.\* And Suetonius tells us, in the life of Domitian, that that emperor required his prefects or governors of provinces to insert in the edicts issued in his name the Lord our God commands, &c. They required to be adored, as Aurelius Victor says of Diocletian They disposed of kingdoms, and introned and dethroned kings at discretion. They declared that all the kingdoms of the earth were subject to them they exacted tributes from all the provinces of the world, they levied a capitation-tax upon all prostitutes, as Suetonius tells us in his life of Caligula, and St. Justin in his second apology for the christian religion. They ordered that their toes should be kissed, as we read of Caligula and Heliogabalus. And in fine, as a mark of subjection and servitude, they ordered the Latin tongue to be learned and practised throughout the whole extent of the Roman empire. To which I must add, what Rosinus tells us in his Roman antiquities, as an instance of their arbitrary and tyrannical government; that they used to authorize all people to fall

\* Eclog. i.

upon such as were excommunicated, or, *diris omnibus devoti*, given up to all the devils in hell, and massacre them with impunity.

So great, so perfect is the conformity between the supremacy, privileges, pretensions, maxims, &c. of the bishops of Rome, and those of the old heathen pontiffs, that, if I had not expressly signified I was giving an account of the heathen popes, the reader might mistake the one for the other.\*

As Rome was the capital of the Roman empire, the bishops of that place, seeing what honours, powers and privileges their heathen predecessors, enjoyed before them, thought they had at least an equal right to the same honours. Accordingly they assumed the title of sovereign pontiff, or high-priest, and supreme visible head of the church. That this was the principle the bishops of Rome first set out upon, it is evident from the conduct of the bishops of Constantinople. For, when that city became the seat of the empire, the bishops thereof started their claim likewise to the title of sovereign pontiff, or universal bishop. John of Constantinople, who usurped this title, was opposed by Pope Gregory I. though neither had a better right to it than the other. Pope Gregory, in order to throw an odium upon Pope John, pretended that he abhorred the title of supreme, or universal bishop; for he called it a diabolical usurpation, and the forerunner of Antichrist, and said that, if the whole power of the church ever came to be put into one man's hands,

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\* Plutarch tells us, that N. Pompilius, one of the first, if not the first high-priest among the Romans, acquired such a reputation, that whatever he delivered (though never so fabulous) was received and believed with implicit and absolute acquiescence, and that his authority was sufficient to make the greatest absurdities and impossibilities pass for matters and points of faith. Here then was the first rise of the Papal Infallibility, &c.



the church must fall. Here Gregory, in order to excite the rest of the bishops against John, artfully insinuates, that he pretended to such an universality as would render all the bishops mere cyphers, as deriving all their significancy and power from him ; whereas he pretended to no other universality than what Gregory and his predecessors did.

When the Roman empire became christian, the emperors assumed the supreme power in all matters of discipline, and maintained it for some hundreds of years. They confirmed the elections of bishops called councils, and established their canons by an imperial edict. They appointed judges for religious causes, and deposed bishops that were lapsed into heresy. For which reason Eusebius calls Constantine the Great universal bishop, or director of all things relating to the external polity of the church.

But, when the Roman empire was divided and broken by the irruption of the barbarous nations, the bishops of Rome, availing themselves of the convulsions of the imperial state, entirely shook off the imperial yoke, and asserted their former pretensions to an universality of jurisdiction, not only over the clergy, but over kings and princes and the whole christian world in all causes religious and civil.

Here the bishops of Rome began to emulate the ambition of the heathen emperors by uniting the two powers in one. Hitherto they wore the mitre in imitation of the heathen pontiffs ; but now they put on the imperial crown glittering with gold and precious stones. Accordingly we find Innocent III. boasting of the same in the following words,\* “The church the spouse has not been married to me without bringing me a fortune. She brought me

\* Serm. 3. de Coronat. Pontiff. T. 8. de Majorit. & Obed.

an invaluable treasure, viz. a plenitude of power in spirituals and temporal. In token of the spiritual power she gave me a mitre; and in token of the temporal she gave me a diadem. The mitre for the priesthood, and the diadem for a kingdom establishing me his vicar who has the following words written in his flesh and on his garments, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Boniface VIII. in the following pompous declaration, or rather definition of faith, asserts this double power usurped by his predecessors.\*  
 "Unam sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam & ipsam Apostolicam urgente fide credere cogimur---extraquam nec salus est nec remissio peccatorum --- in hac ejusque potestate duos esse gladios, spirituales videlicet & temporalem, Evangelicis dictis instrumur. Certe qui in potestate Petri temporalem gladium esse negat male verbum attendit domini proferentis, Converte gladium tuum in vaginam uterque ergo est in potestate Ecclesiæ spiritualis scilicet gladius & materialis --- oportet autem gladium esse sub gladio & temporalem auctoritatem spiritali subjici potestati---spiritalem autem & dignitate & nobilitate terrenam quamlibet præcellere potestatem oportet --- fateri --- si deviat terrena potestas judicabitur a potestate spiritali: sed, si deviat spiritalis minor, a suo superiori. Si vero suprema, a solo deo non ab hominibus poterit judicari --- porro subesse Romano Pontifici omnem humanam creaturam declaramus, dicimus, definimus & pronunciamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis. Datum Laterani, an. 1302.

Accordingly, when he instituted his grand jubilee, he appeared the first day in his pontificalia, but in his imperial robes the second day, whilst people cried along the streets before him, "Here are two swords," viz. to denote this double power.

\* Extrav. Commun. Lib. 1.

The heathen pontiffs deposed crowned heads, and disposed of their kingdoms as they pleased; the bishops of Rome, have, in like manner, excommunicated and deposed kings and princes, laid their kingdoms under an interdict, and absolved, or rather pretended to absolve, their subjects from their oaths of allegiance. Thus, when Julius II. deposed John II. king of Navarre, and gave his kingdom to Ferdinand, king of Spain, he made the following discourse to his cardinals in full consistory.\* “We must assist the king of Spain, and draw the two swords against the people of France and Navarre, the common enemies of all good men. And, in the mean time, whilst we are sharpening the secular blade, we must make the necks of those schismatics feel the edge of the spiritual.” Accordingly the king of Navarre was denounced a heretic and schismatic, was deprived he and his wife and children, and posterity, of his kingdom and temporalities, and the whole adjudged to the king of Spain.

Sixtus V. who, from a swine-herd became pope, expresses himself in the same haughty style, in the bull of excommunication, which he fulminated in the year 1585, against Henry king of Navarre, and the prince of Conde: he says,† That the power given to St. Peter and his successors, is superior to all the powers of the kings of the earth; that it belongs to this power to enforce the observance of the laws, and punish the refractory, by deposing and levelling them to the ground as ministers of satan; that he is constrained by the necessity of his office, to draw the sword of correction against Henry, formerly king of Navarre, and Henry prince of Conde, a spurious (as he calls them) and detestable offspring of the illustrious

\* See Antonius Nebrissenius a Spanish writer, Lib. 1. C. 1, 2, 3.

† See Mezeray in the Life of Henry III.



house of Bourbon. Wherefore being invested with a full power, which he received from the king of kings, and lord of monarchs, he denounces them as heretics, relapsed, ringleaders, fautors, and public protectors of heresy ; and as such, he deprives them and their successors of all their lordships, dignities and offices, and declares them incapable of succeeding to any principality or kingdom whatsoever.

We have seen already, how the heathen pontiffs affected to be called gods, sued for divine honours, and required the worship of kissing their toes. We have also seen, how the bishops of Rome have affected to be called gods, &c. Now, we shall see the ceremony of kissing their toes, and adoring them as gods.\* The highest act of adoration they pay to the God of heaven, is what they offer him by sacrifice upon an altar. Now, to show that they adore the pope as they do the God of heaven, they place him, when elected, upon an altar ; then the cardinals, &c. proceed to the ceremony called *Venite adoremus*. They prostrate themselves before him, as the Persian nobility did to Darius the Mede when he was elected by his horse,† and proceed to kiss his toes or feet. When the emperor is present, he goes to the first step mounting up to the altar, there kneels, and then mounts up to the pope's feet, and kisses them. It is not therefore, surprizing, they should ever after style him God, and adore him accordingly. Thus, we find in a letter of thanks, which cardinal du Perron wrote to Clement the Eighth, as recorded by cardinal Baronius : “ Among all those whom your holiness has promoted to the dignity of the sacred cardinalat, there is not one, says Perron, who embraces, reveres, and adores your holiness

\* See the book of ceremonies published in the year 1516 cum Privilegio Leonis 10.

† Justin. lib. 1. C. 10.

with greater affection than I do. I have always revered your holiness as a God upon earth.

There is another point of conformity, which I should have omitted, were it not avowed by the popish writers themselves. We have already seen how the heathens used to p — s upon, and besmear their idols; they had not only charged their gods with incest, adultery, theft, murder and other scandalous excesses, but also loaded them with imprecations, and the most opprobrious names. We have also seen how usual it is in Spain and Italy to call the Virgin Mary a whore. Now we shall see that the gods of Rome, the popes, have been painted in the same colours. All people have heard the story of Pope Joan, and though several protestants may be in doubt about it, yet the papists cannot blame any protestant for believing it, as it was they themselves that first gave it out. For Antoninus, archbishop of Florence, though afterwards canonized, was the first that published this fact to the world a long time before the days of the Reformation.

Genebrardus, archbishop of Aix, says in his chronology, that all the popes of the tenth century, were so many monsters for vice and wickedness.

Cardinal Baronius\* says, that the chair of St. Peter, and the throne of Christ, has been invaded by men that were monstrous in their lives, dissolute in their morals, and abominable in every respect.

Cardinal Bellarmin, in his book de Rom. Pontifice, speaking of pope John the Twelfth, describes him as the worst of all the popes. Platina calls him the most wicked of all men, or rather a monster. And Luitprandus gives us a detail of the crimes he was convicted of in a council of bishops. He says he conferred holy orders in a stable, that he canted bishoprics to the highest bidders,

\* Ad. An. 897.

that he converted the palace into a brothel, that he debauched the women that went to Rome for devotion's sake, whether married or unmarried; nay, that he did not spare them even in the churches;\* that he drank the devil's health; that when he played at any game he invoked Jupiter, Venus, and the devils in hell; and in fine, that he was run through the body in the act of adultery.

Matthew Paris tells us, that Gregory VII. when on his death-bed, sent for his cardinals, and confessed to them, that by the instigation of the devil, he provoked the wrath of God against the whole human race. This pope, the once direful scourge of the christian world, since whose days nothing was more common than to see kings deposed, and their subjects absolved from their allegiance, has been canonized at Rome, and proposed as an object of adoration to the whole world, though he was no more a Christian than a Turk, as may be sufficiently seen in a letter he wrote to Anzir, king of Mauritania†, where he fixes upon the mode of worshipping the Supreme Being, as the difference between his religion and the religion of that Mahometan prince, and wishes him eternal rest in Abraham's bosom.

All historians agree, that Silvester the Second was a necromancer and magician, that he made a

\* In this he acted like the heathen gods, of whom it is said, that when they were enamoured of any woman, they either surprised her in their temples, or sent her an assignation. Thus, as the Roman historians tell us, when Mundus, a young Roman knight found that all his endeavours to conquer Paulini's virtue proved fruitless, he corrupted the priests of Anibuis, who persuaded her to believe that the god was struck with her beauty; on which she was that very night led by her husband to the temple. A few days after Mundus, whom she happened to meet, let her into the secret. Paulini, enraged with indignation, carried her complaint to Tiberus who ordered the priests to be burnt alive.

† See Fleury's Church History, L. 62, No. 34.



compact with the devil upon condition of obtaining whatever he desired, and that he was at last torn to pieces by the evil spirit.

The historian Mezeray tells us, in his life of Charles the Eighth of France, that the Roman purple was never so much dishonoured as it was by pope Alexander the Sixth ; that he had no faith for God or man ; that he trampled religion under his feet ; that he prostituted his honour, and sold human and divine right to the highest bidders ; that when he was only a cardinal, he kept several mistresses, by one of whom he had four sons, whom he called not his nephews (as others do) but his children ; that he had a bastard-daughter, who was his wife and daughter and daughter-in-law.

The same historian says, that, when Charles the Eighth went to Rome, the cardinals assembled about him, and remonstrated that he must have been sent thither by divine Providence to defend the rights of the church against the usurpations of Alexander, who, in the chair of the apostles, practised daily the same crimes by which he procured his promotion ; that he was a worthy successor, not of St. Peter, but of the traitor Judas and Simon Magus ; that he was more allied to the Koran than to the Gospel ; that, like a tiger, he forced into the fold of Christ with his fauns, his troop of bastards infamous for vice and licentiousness. The same author adds, that this monster of nature, as he calls him, poisoned himself, having drank through mistake a poisonous draught he had prepared for cardinal Adrian.

All historians speak with the same horror of pope Julius the Second. Lewis the Twelfth of France having defeated that pope in battle, assembled a council in Tuscany where he declared the pope to be Antichrist, and caused money to be coined with this inscription, *Perdam Babylonis nomen*, as was observed before.

It is notorious to all Europe, what an unprincipled, profligate man Leo the Tenth was, who was often heard to say, as cardinal Bembo testifies, "What immense wealth we have amassed by this fable of Christ!"

It is not surprising that the popes should treat emperors and crowned heads with hautiness and contempt, obliging some of them to remain three days and as many nights barefoot at the gates of the pope's palace, and crowning others with their feet, and kicking off the crown again, &c. This I say is not surprising when we consider with what indignity and barbarity they treat each other.—The heathen gods were represented as cruel and unnatural; one dethroning his father, another devouring his own children, &c. the modern gods of Rome are represented in like manner.

Pope Stephen the Sixth ordered (as Platina Flurer and others tells us,) that the body of Formosus his predecessor should be taken up out of the grave stripped of his pontificals, and buried among the laity after cutting off the fingers he used to consecrate with. But his successor surpassed him in barbarity; for he ordered the same body to be taken up again, the head to be cut off, and the body thrown into the Tiber.\*

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\* Abbe Gould, an Irish priest, in his defence of the Infallibility of the church, says, that God must have a hand in supporting and protecting the popish religion, otherwise that the gates of hell would have long since prevailed against it, through the wicked lives of the popes. Now if this argument were of any force, it would equally prove that God has a hand in protecting the mahometan and heathen religions; for, notwithstanding the profligacy of their founders and protectors, one has subsisted now near 1200 years, and the other near 4000. It was by sanguinary laws, persecutions and massacres, that the popish religion was upheld all along; it was by the same methods the other two were upheld; therefore if God has a hand in one, he has equally a hand in all three.

It was usual with the living to fulminate bulls of excommunication against the dead, and each other, denouncing and stigmatising one the other with the titles of heretic, schismatic, antichrist, &c. and filling all Europe with bloodshed, confusion and desolation. This was more or less the case in the several schisms, in all about thirty, that happened between the popes, one of which lasted about 50 years, when there were three popes seen at once contending for the pretended chair of St. Peter.

Now it is most astonishing that people can be so stupefied, so blinded by the prejudices of education, self-interest, or otherwise, as not to feel the absurdity of their own tenets (though the most palpable in the world) nor see the glaring contradictions that stare them in the face. We have heard and seen awhile ago, how the popes affected to be called gods, and piqued themselves upon the title; how they were acknowledged and adored as such; and therefore were not to be judged of mortal man *quia Deus non judicatur ab hominibus*. But now we find those pretended gods judged, deposed, &c. not only by each other, but also by bishops and other mortals. The bishops assembled at Basil and Constance were so much ashamed of the absurdity of the papal pretensions that they thought it necessary for the peace of the church, and the honour of human reason and common sense, to bring down those popes from their high thrones to the foot of earthly tribunals, and subject them, like other mortals, to the inquests and judgments of human laws.

We have heard how the popes were called antichrists by each other, by the French king, &c. now we shall see that this charge is well grounded. St. Paul speaks of Antichrist thus :\*

\* ii. Thessal. 2, 3, 4.



deceive you by any means ; for that day (the day of judgment and general resurrection) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped : “ So that he as God sitteth in the temple (or church) of God, showing himself that he is God ; giving heed to doctrines of demons,\* (that is, angels and saints, as I proved before) speaking lies in hypocrisy, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thankfulness.” Here antichrist is described. Now all these characters centre in the bishop of Rome. He calls himself God, and exalteth himself above all that is called god, not only above all his heathen predecessors, but also all bishops, primates, crowned heads, and all mankind, nay, and above the God of heaven ; for, at his coronation, he sits on the high altar in St. Peter’s church and there receives adoration, whereby he makes the altar of God his footstool. He affects divine titles and attributes, as, holiness and infallibility, assuming divine powers and prerogatives in granting pardons and indulgences to the most abominable crimes, and that for as many thousands of years as he pleases. He asserts his decrees to be of the same, or greater authority than the word of God ; for he says he has as much authority to make laws as St. Paul, for instance, ever had ; nay, and to dispense with, or even to abrogate any law that the apostles ever made. He commands the worship of images, of angels, and saints, &c. contrary to the express law of God. He forbids the clergy and nuns to marry,† and commands to

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\* 1. Tim. 4.

† It is evident, that if the clergy were allowed to marry, they would take care to give no offence to the established government of the place of their abode. Therefore, the Pope, by a masterly stroke of human policy, has

abstain from certain meats on certain days and seasons. He affects the thunder of the Almighty, and calls his decrees the fulminations of the Vatican. He is styled in the decretals and canons, "Our Lord God the Pope; another God upon earth; King of kings and Lord of lords. The same is the dominion of God and the Pope. To believe that our Lord God the Pope might not decree as he did, would be heretical. The power of the Pope is greater than all created power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestrial and infernal. The Pope doth whatsoever he listeth, even things unlawful, and is more than God."

The pope exalteth himself above all that is called God; for, he enforces the observance of his own laws with more rigour and severity than he does the eternal laws of the God of heaven. There is not, in the whole body of the canon-law, an excommunication *ipso facto* annexed to the violation of the divine laws forbidding fornication, adultery, theft, robbery, murder, or the like; but if, in conformity to the divine institution of marriage, and the natural and unalienable right that every one is born with, a clergyman or a nun marries, they are both excommunicated by the very fact, and delivered up to the devil for ever, whether God will or not; the clergyman is degraded, and the nun burnt alive. There is no excommunication annexed to blasphemy against God, though there is to blasphemy against the pope. There is no excommunication annexed to murder, sedition, or rebellion, though there is to the counterfeiting the

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deprived them of that natural and unalienable right, in order that they may be free to pass from one country to another, to establish his laws; and when they have raised rebellion or sedition any where, to repair to him, where they are sure to be highly rewarded. And though he alleges Scripture, &c. to give a plausible colour to this sanction, yet, he does nothing but what antichrist, or a devil transformed into an angel of light would do, the better to deceive and impose upon the world.

pope's decrees or letters, the concealing any thing belonging to the see of Rome, or the invading any of the pope's territories, or pretended rights and privileges.

The pope exalteth himself above the God of heaven ; for he pretends to do more than God can. God has no other god to command ; but the pope pretends to command God down upon his altar when he pleases. Nay, cardinal Bellarmin says, that if he commanded us to practice vice, and shun virtue, we would be obliged under pain of eternal damnation, to act accordingly. Now this is more than God himself can do, and consequently more than he could require from us. For, as God has, by the light of reason and revelation, since the creation, commanded us, upon pain of incurring his high displeasure and eternal damnation, to shun vice and practice virtue, if he commanded us now to do otherwise, we would be authorized to say with St. Paul :\* " Let him be accursed."

As a further confirmation of what I have alleged to prove that the pope is the antichrist foretold and described in scripture, I shall observe two things that are very remarkable and striking. The first is, that it was the general opinion of the fathers since the beginning of christianity, that, upon the decline and destruction of the Roman empire, antichrist would be fully revealed in all the characters ascribed by scripture to the man of sin and perdition, who was to sit in the church of God as God, &c. This no man will deny who is acquainted with the sentiments of the primitive writers, upon the several prophecies that relate to antichrist. The second thing is that as soon as the Roman empire was divided and broken, and the bishop of Rome assumed and usurped all the titles, powers and privileges that I have al-



ready specified, Europe cried out that antichrist was come, that the pope was he, and that all the prophecies relative to the man of sin and perdition, and the great seducer of mankind were fulfilled in him. So general was this cry, not only among the people called heretics, but even among the papists themselves, that the popes, in order to assert their own credit and authority, thought it necessary to proceed to excommunications, persecutions, and inquisitorial cruelties against the one and the other; to call councils, and employ their interests with crowned heads, in order to suppress the question entirely, and interdict that any body should speak of antichrist any more. So evident was the completion of the prophecies that every one saw the reality in Rome.\*

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\* That the bishop of Rome is the antichrist foretold in the Scriptures, appears demonstrably from the very arguments that are alleged by the popish divines in support of the pope's supremacy, &c. It was prophesied of antichrist that he should come after the working of God in appearance, though of satan in reality; (1) that he should come with all power and signs and wonders, (2) nay with such miracles and wonders as would deceive the very elect if it were possible; (3) that he should forbid to marry and command to abstain from certain meats; (4) that he should teach to worship dead men and women; (5) that he should appear with all deceitfulness of righteousness in appearance but unrighteousness in reality; (6) that he should sit in the temple of God, as God showing himself that he is God; (7) that his adherents should labour under such strong delusion as to believe lies; (8) and think they were doing God service when they persecuted the true believers; (9) that they should pretend to prophecy, to cast out devils, and work miracles, &c. in the name of Christ. (10) Now all these characters are realized in the pope and his party. It is plain that the elect could not be in danger of being deceived by antichrist, if his pretensions were not seemingly founded upon scripture authority, as well as miracles, wonders, &c. It is allowed by all that the elect, comparatively speaking are but few, and that those who in every age, opposed the innovations of Rome were but few likewise, the rest being borne down by the torrent of the times. What then could antichrist do that the pope hath not done? What has been predicted of antichrist that hath not been fulfilled in the pope? What can the Romanists say in their defence but what the adherents of antichrist will say in the day of judgment. (11) Let the Romanists think of this and tremble.

(1) 2. Thes. 2. 9. (2) *ibid.* (3) Math. 24. 24. (4) 1. Tim. 4. 3. (5) *ibid.* V. 1. (6) 2. Thess. 2. 10. (7) *ibid.* V. 4. (8) *ibid.* V. 11. (9) John 16. 2. (10) Math. 7. 22. (11) *ibid.*

Here it will be objected that what I have hitherto said is utterly inconsistent with our Saviour's promise to St. Peter in the following words.\* "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," &c. To this I answer, first, that as the meaning of those words is controverted, we are to follow the received maxims of philosophers and divines: *non sunt neganda clara propter quædam obscura*. I have proved already, and shall prove more at large hereafter, that the gates of hell the powers of idolatry and superstition, have long since prevailed against the church and pope of Rome. Nay our adversaries own that the pope considered as bishop of the particular diocese of Rome, may with that particular church fall into heresy as well as any other particular church upon earth. This we have been taught in the *Sorbonne*. Therefore the particular church of Rome *ex-confesso*, has no better claim to incerrability by virtue of our Saviour's promise than any other national christian church upon earth.

Secondly. Our adversaries ought to agree among themselves about the meaning of those words, before they urge them against protestants. It is notorious that the French and Italians will never agree in this point. Nor will the pope's advocates ever submit to the documents of the fathers but where they like, tho' they obtrude their traditions upon the world as a second rule of faith. Thus the bishops assembled at Constance denounced all those as heretics, who should insist upon the discipline and practice of the apostles and primitive church, of receiving the communion in both kinds; whereby they indirectly treated the apostles and primitive christians as heretics. Cornelius Mus, bishop of Bitonto† says: "I would give more

\* Math. 16. 18.

† A city and bishop's see in the kingdom of Naples.

credit to one pope than to a thousand Austins, a thousand Jeromes, and a thousand Gregories." Cardinal Baronius reproaches St. Austin with ignorance for not understanding our Saviour's words to St. Peter. Cardinal Cajetan says that God has not tied the exposition of the scriptures to the sense or opinions of the ancient doctors.

Thirdly. These words of our Saviour to St. Peter are so far from being conclusive for either St. Peter's or the Pope's supremacy, that the contrary has been asserted by clouds of fathers and ecclesiastical writers. Thus St. Cyprian says: "the rest of the apostles were what St. Peter was, invested with an equality of honour and power." St. Crisostom says: "St. Paul showed upon the dispute that happened between him and Peter at Antioch that he was equal to the other in dignity." St. Jerome says: "You say that the church was built upon St. Peter; but I say it was built upon all the the Apostles." St. Basil says, "That Peter was only one of the mountains upon which our Saviour promised to build his church." Six hundred and thirty bishops assembled at Chalcedon,\* defined that the bishop of Constantinople should be equal in all things to the bishop of Rome. The sixth council of Carthage wrote to Celestin bishop of Rome, warning him to take heed not to receive any more appeals from Africk, nor to allege any canons in support of his pretensions, nor to bring wordly pride into the church.

Fourthly. When the bishops of Rome first put in the claim to an universal preeminence and superiority over the church, they backed their pretensions with all the plausible arguments they could devise. One of their resources was a story that prevailed in many places, that St. Peter was first bishop of Antioch and afterwards of Rome, where,

\* An. 451.



it was said, he suffered martyrdom. The story found abettors like another story that was handed about, viz. that St. Paul was bishop of Rome, from the time he wrote his epistle to the christians of that city, to the day of his death. The bishops of Rome found the former story more to their purpose, as the words recorded by St. Mathew seemed to give St. Peter a superiority over the rest of the apostles. For, had not those words been recorded, the bishops of Rome would all along have called themselves the successors of St. Paul.\* The story is of itself sufficient to defeat the bishop of Rome's pretensions, as the bishops of Antioch would then be the successors of St. Peter as much as those of Rome, nay the only successors: for, if St. Peter filling any see, gave it a privilege, over all others, then the see of Antioch must have received that privilege, nor could he withdraw it when he pleased. For, either it was annexed to his person or to the see he filled; if to his person, then it was in vain for any see or successor to pretend to such a privilege, But if to the see, then the see of Antioch has it beyond all contradiction, and the foundation of the supremacy of Rome is become a mere romance.

As to the authority of the fathers who gave credit to, and recorded the tradition of St. Peter's translation from Antioch to Rome, it carries no more weight than it does in other fabulous traditions they have transmitted to us. There were not more universal traditions in the church, than some

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\* As no man ever held that either St. Peter or St. Paul was bishop of Constantinople, and as the bishops of that city did, as soon as it was made the imperial seat, put in their claim to a superiority of honour and jurisdiction over all other bishops, it is plain that St. Peter's pretended translation to Rome joined to the words of St. Mathew, were only a plausible pretext to give sanctions to the pretensions of the bishop of Rome. For the principle, the one and the other set out upon, was the circumstance of being seated in the capital city of the empire where the heathen high-priests reigned before.

of those that are recorded in the Roman breviary : for instance, that Mary Magdalen was a common prostitute, that Dionysius the Areopagite was bishop of Paris, &c. and yet those traditions are now rejected and confuted by some of the ablest critics and divines of the church of Rome. That tradition is as romantic as the assumption of the Virgin Mary recorded by John Damascen, seven hundred years after her death, and yet, as the fifteenth of August is for ever sacred to the memory of it, nothing can be more universally established though nothing can be more romantic or absurd. The bare relation of it is enough, not only to confute it, but to bring all ancient traditions into discredit and contempt. Damascen tells us that when the virgin died, which he says, happened at Gethsemane a valley at the foot of the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, all the apostles were raised up into the air, and in a moment's time, transported from the several quarters they had been in of the world, to the place where her corpse was buried ; that Thomas the apostle, who took three days to perform his journey, wanted to see the body, in order to adore it ; that having searched for the body every where, round about,\* but not finding it, they concluded it was carried up to heaven ; that Dionysius the Areopagite was present likewise, and gave an account of it in a letter to Timothy, bishop of Ephesus, (though he is said to have been present as well as the Areopagite himself) and (which is the main drift, as it is fathered upon the Areopagite) called St. Peter : *prima & antiquissima theologorum summitas*. Here is a romance like that of the "dishes causway running through the air over our heads here in Ireland." There are many supposititious works ascribed to the Areopagite as well as to the Sibylls and others. Let any man

\* *Omni ex parte sacrum ejus corpus nequaquam invenire potuerunt.*

read Calmet only, and he will be astonished to find the fathers so various, so contrary to each other, not only in their account of the transactions of the two first centuries, but also upon the facts recorded in Scripture, For instance, what trade St. Joseph was of, for there is no trade but one or other gave him ; whether those that are called the brothers of our Saviour were not Joseph's children by a first wife ; whether the virgin Mary had not children after the birth of our Saviour ; whether Magdalen did not live and die a virgin ; whether the eclipse, that happened at our Saviour's death, extended beyond the bounds of Judea ; whether the devil ever knew that our Saviour was born of a virgin ; whether the devils that our Saviour cast out of people's bodies, were not mortal sins only, and not devils at all, except in a metonymical sense, &c. &c.

Fifthly. In order to ascertain the true meaning of our Saviour's words I must observe that the light of reason is the first and supreme rule prescribed by the author of nature to rational creatures ; that revelation was ordained to direct and reinforce but never to contradict or supersede our reason ; that the literal sense of Scripture is never to be followed, but when it coincides with the spirit ; that when the letter implies any thing contrary to reason or common sense it is to be abandoned ; and that a body with two heads is as monstrous in politics as in nature. These things duly attended to, the meaning of our Saviour's words will be easily determined.

Our Saviour having asked his disciples what the public said of him, they answered that some said he was Elias, others John the Baptist, &c. Then he asked themselves what they thought of him ; Peter, through a particular forwardness and zeal,



answered first of all that he was the son of the living God. In return our Saviour said: thou art Peter, &c. Now the Scripture does not say that the rest of the apostles did not make this answer as well as St. Peter, nor does it say that our Saviour did not make this promise to the rest of the apostles as well as to St. Peter. There are a great many things that our Saviour and the apostles said and did upon this as well as other occasions that are not recorded in Scripture. Can any man believe that the rest of the apostles did not answer here as well as St. Peter? And surely our Saviour must have answered them as he did St. Peter, though there is not a word of it recorded? What distinguished St. Peter from the rest of the apostles was his forwardness. He was the first, and perhaps the only person, that drew his sword at our Saviour's apprehension. He was the first to speak, or to act, almost upon every occasion; and therefore he was immediately checked or encouraged by our Saviour according to the occasion.

Now as the word 'rock' must in a figurative sense signify a foundation or foundation-stone of the church of Christ, nothing can be concluded from thence in favour of the pope's supremacy, without proving these three things, viz. 1st, That the honours, privileges and powers, said to have been conferred upon St. Peter here, were conferred upon him exclusive of the rest of the apostles. 2dly, That St. Peter was bishop of Rome. 3dly, That the same honours, &c. were to be communicated in the same extensive manner to his successors the bishops of Rome to the end of time. But neither of these can be proved. As to the first it is absolutely false for several reasons.

1st. To speak in strict rigour, neither St. Peter's person nor his confession, nor any of the apostles, taken separately or together, were the foundation

of the church of Christ. It was Christ himself according to that of St. Paul,\* "Other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid even Jesus Christ." Therefore it is only in an enlarged sense that any of the apostles are called the rock or foundation of the church.

2dly. Even in that enlarged sense St. Peter was no more a rock or foundation of the church of Christ than any of the rest of the apostles; for it is said in the above cited epistle, and 21st of revelation, and elsewhere, that the church was built upon twelve foundations. Therefore the rock or foundation, alluded to here, was no more than the confession made by all the apostles as well as by St. Peter; which confession was a rock or foundation of the church, not because it was made by any of the apostles, but because it contained that doctrine upon which the whole system of the christian religion was founded, viz. that Christ was the son of the living God.

3dly. This doctrine of St. Peter's supremacy would, in the sense of our adversaries, be a fundamental article of the christian religion; nay it would be the chief hinge upon which the whole christian system should turn, inasmuch as there would be no true faith, no certain salvation without resting upon, and adhering to, this rock, this foundation, this centre of christian unity. If that were so, the other three evangelists would have been guilty of a shameful omission, as they had left all christians in the dark about one of the most essential points of religion: for they did not say one word of this pretended privilege of St. Peter and his rock, though three out of four spoke of the last supper, which, in the principles of our adversaries, would be of infinitely less consequence than the article of the supremacy.

\* 1. Cor. 3. 11.

They only tell us that Christ gave the apostles a power of loosing and binding, remitting and retaining sins; which is a demonstration that they looked upon what our Saviour said to St. Peter to have been said to all the apostles indiscriminately.

4thly. They say that by the promise of the keys made to St. Peter, was meant a supremacy over the rest of the apostles. But there is not a word of those keys in the other three evangelists: which shows, as in the case before, that nothing in particular was intended here for St. Peter above the rest. If the keys were ensigns of supreme authority then the scribes and pharisees who, in our Saviour's time, carried the keys of the temple which was a figure of the church, would have been superior to the high-priest himself. The expression is figurative like that of the rock, and means only the power of loosing and binding, which, as I observed before, was equally given to all the apostles.

5thly. If there had been such a chief officer appointed by our Saviour, St. Paul would have mentioned him when he enumerated the officers of the christian church.

6thly. Our Saviour has frequently declared against a superiority among his apostles, and told them\* there should be no lordship among them as among the nations; and desired them not to affect to be called Rabbi, for says he † “one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren.”

7thly. Paul and Barnabas did not appeal to Peter upon the controversy that happened at Antioch, but to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, nor is the answer returned in the name of Peter prime of the apostles and vicar-general of Christ upon earth, but, in the name of the apostles, elders and brethren. Nor was it he that opened

\* Math. 20. 26.

† ibid. 23.8.



or closed the council as appears from the fifteenth of the Acts.\*

8thly. St. Paul, in the second chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, says, that he was in no respect inferior to any of the apostles ; and that he withstood Peter to his face because he was to be blamed, which certainly he would not have done in so public a manner, at least would not have published it to the world, if he had looked upon him to be by divine right supreme over them all. Nay he was so far from looking upon any of the apostles to be supreme over himself, that he called James, Cephas or Peter, and John, *seeming* pillars.

9thly. St Paul says in the aforesaid chapter that he was the apostle of the Gentiles as Peter was of the Jews. How then could St. Peter be the supreme of all as he was only an apostle of an handful in comparison of the rest ? Nay it would seem rather that St. Paul was the chief of all, as he did by writing, preaching, and governing, what any supreme head of the church could do.

Upon the whole then it is plain that it is nothing to the purpose whether St. Peter ever was bishop of Rome or not. For if he received no superiority over the rest of the apostles, as I have proved he did not, how could he transmit a privilege to his successors which he never had himself ? But, as our adversaries lay great stress upon the supposed fact, I shall show that it is highly probable he never was at Rome. And 1st, There is no express

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\* Though the words " it seemed good to the Holy Ghost," do not relate to any act made by the apostles at the council of Jerusalem but to former revelations, whereby the apostles were authorized to receive the Gentiles into the church, without obliging them to the duties of the ceremonial law, yet the Romanists conclude from thence, that the Holy Ghost presides in their councils, and therefore that their councils are infallible ; which is no less than an imitation of the old heathens who had their god Consus to preside in their councils, from whence it would equally follow that the councils of the heathens were infallible.—See Plutarch and others.

mention in scripture of his having ever been at Rome. He indeed says, in the fifth chapter of his first epistle, that the church at Babylon saluted the brethren of the dispersion. But how does it appear that he was in the city he calls Babylon, when he wrote that epistle? Or how does it appear that that Babylon was Rome? There were anciently two cities of that name, one in Asia and the other in Africk. As to Rome, it was never called Babylon by any of the apostles but St. John, and that after his banishment to Patmos. Luke and Paul often speak of Rome, and call it only by its proper name. It is more probable that the Babylon, St. Peter speaks of, was the city of that name in Asia, for we read of his having travelled through the most part of that country; and St. Luke says, in his history of the acts of the apostles, that the most of his famous acts were done in Palestine.

2dly. St. Paul says that he was the apostle of the Gentiles. But this would be false if St. Peter was bishop of Rome and supreme head of the church.

3dly. We read of St. Peter's having been at Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, &c. and that he travelled through Cappadocia, Pontus, Bythinia and the most parts of Asia. How then could he be bishop of Rome rather than of any other place?

4thly. St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans fifteen years after St. Peter's pretended translation to Rome, and saluted the brethren there whom he mentions in the 16th chapter; but not a word of St. Peter. He wrote his epistle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and second to Timothy all from Rome, and mentions his fellow-labourers there, but not a word about Peter.

5thly. If St. Peter had been the chief of the apostles and supreme head of the church, he would have had the care of all the churches upon him, and therefore could not have been bishop of one

place rather than another, as St. Paul never was for the same reason, unless we believe the old tradition which says he was bishop of Rome : for he wrote to both Jews and Gentiles separately which no other of the apostles did.

But, suppose he had been bishop of Rome, that would make nothing for the pope's supremacy, unless it were proved that the honours, privileges, and powers, he is said to have been invested with, were communicated by him to his successors. Now this is a thing that never can be proved. Was it in the power of the apostles to communicate their privileges as they pleased? Had not they several gifts and privileges that their successors have no right to? Must we look upon their successors to be divinely inspired and their works to be of divine authority? no certainly. If St. Peter had been the rock and chief foundation-stone in the sense of our adversaries, and the same privilege communicated to his pretended successors to the end of time, the church of Christ would then be a building in the air. For, as no building can be raised till the last foundation-stone be laid, the church of Christ could never be built till the last pope that will ever exist be created. But by supposing the whole foundation of the church to be laid in our Saviour and the apostles, we can easily conceive how the superstructure could be raised and advanced ever since, by the propagation and establishment of the christian religion throughout the world.

I shall close this article by clearing up the true meaning of our Saviour's words \* whereon the Romanists ground their boasted infallibility. When our Saviour recommended to his disciples to imitate the humility and innocence of little children, he recommended to them also to take such and such methods with an offending brother; and at

\* Math. 18. 15. 16. 17. 18.



last, if he did not mend to tell it to the church ; and then, if he did not obey the church, to regard him as an heathen and publican. Afterwards he told them that whatsoever they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, &c.

These words of our Saviour have been as much abused as his words to St. Peter, as will appear by unfolding our Saviour's discourse. After he had recommended to his disciples to immitate the innocence of children, he said : If thy brother sin, use all prudent means to reclaim him. First tell him privately of his fault ; and if he be thereby persuaded to amend, thou hast gained thy purpose and saved thy brother. But, if he reject thy private admonition, take with thee two or three other persons that, by the authority of these witnesses, he may be convinced and prevailed with to repent. But, if this method also prove ineffectual, tell thy case to the church or congregation. And if he still be so obstinate as not to be influenced by public reproof, you have done your duty, and you may have no more to do with him than with an heathen and publican. Verily I say unto you, that whatsoever injury or trespass, taking these prudent methods that I have laid down, ye shall bind on your offending and incorrigible brother on earth, shall be bound or approved of in heaven ; and whatsoever trespass ye shall loose on earth, by reducing the offender to repentance in the use of the rules I have prescribed, shall be loosed in heaven.

Now what connexion has this doctrine with that of infallibility ? Forsooth, indeed, because a tribunal acquits or condemns a man according to the rules of wisdom and prudence, that tribunal therefore must be infallible ? Is there any thing so dear to the generality of mankind as their lives and properties ? And yet did any man since the creation, except a fanatic, ever maintain that the civil

power is infallible? And still are not the judgments of the civil power ratified in heaven? What need then for an ecclesiastical infallibility, if not to give sanction to spiritual tyranny and oppression? Every man upon earth has his own salvation in his own power, so that he cannot be deprived of the possession without his own consent; not so with a man's life and property: therefore there is infinitely more reason for a civil infallibility than an ecclesiastical one; consequently, as God never endowed the civil power with the gift of infallibility, much less did he endow the ecclesiastical power with such a gift. This the apostles were sensible of; for, when they were to pronounce upon any difficult case, they held a convocation for the purpose: not because they thought such a convocation infallible, but because they would observe all the prudent methods our Saviour had prescribed. Nor does this derogate in the least from the authority of the apostles as holy and inspired writers; for, all that is necessary to ascertain the divine authority of their doctrines is, that it should be true, that those inspired writers have not erred. Now, that they have not erred, God himself, who cannot witness a falsehood, has certified by miracles and other splendid attestations from heaven.

Hence those arguments must be absurd which the Romanists draw from the conduct of Protestant convocations, viz. that they must look upon themselves to be infallible, otherwise, say the Romanists, how can they pretend to lay people under excommunications and the like? The Protestants do not pretend to extend their jurisdiction to the other world, or to say that those who die under their censures, are damned to all eternity, as the Romanists do. The punishments they inflict upon obstinate and incorrigible sinners are only temporal.

Therefore the punishments inflicted by them, like those inflicted by the civil power, may be as just and equitable as any ever were, though destitute of the privilege of infallibility.

Of ecclesiastical revenues, the celibacy of the clergy, the different orders of monks and friars, their vows of poverty, their habits, austerities, &c. I have already observed, by referring to Livy\*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus,† Juvenal,‡ Baronius§ and others; that there were several orders of priests among the old heathens; that their heads were shaved in the form of a crown called *fenestella*, because of its resemblance to a little window; that at their sacrifices, they wore an amict or linen cloth upon their heads; that they wore surplices, albs or long shirts, stoles, chasubles, copes, &c. Now I shall proceed to consider other points of conformity between Popery and Paganism. And first, of ecclesiastical revenues. The heathen priests had the benefit of an offertory, *i. e.* the offerings that were made on the altars or elsewhere in honour of gods. But, as those offerings were uncertain, Numa Pompilius, in order to establish his clergy upon a reputable footing, instituted and appropriated certain public revenues for the support of all the religious orders of men and women. His example was followed by several, who consecrated their fortunes to the same pious uses. Those several endowments, like so many benefices, were in the gift of the prince or senate, or college of pontiffs, or private persons, according as the right of presentation was acquired. And the sovereign pontiff, as we learn from Livy|| and Seutonius,¶ sometimes granted a dispensation to hold pluralities.

A third resource was the obits and anniversaries for the dead, the legacies and testamentary dona-

\* Lib. 1. † In vita Num. Pomy.

‡ Lib. 3.

§ Sat 6.

¶ Ad. an. 44.

¶ In Claudio.



tions made by such as would have sacrifices and prayers offered to the gods, for the repose of their souls.\* In fine they had several other resources, as penalties, forfeitures, and confiscations, which the sovereign pontiff appropriated to himself, as may be instanced in the case of Cicero, whose effects were, upon his proscription, confiscated and appropriated for the purposes of sacrifices to be offered in the temple of the goddess Liberty.

Secondly, the celibacy of the clergy is likewise of heathen extraction. St. Jerome tells us,† that the chief priests among the Athenians, called Hierophantes, were so continent, that they even drank the juice of hemlock to suppress all motions of concupiscence and preserve their virtue; so that when they were promoted to the pontificate, they ceased to be men. He also introduces Cheremon the stoic, giving an account of the celibacy and austere life of the old Egyptian priests, viz. that upon entering into their college or labyrinth, they renounced the world, abdicated all property, lived upon public contributions, admitted none of their friends or relations near them, saw no women, abstained from meat, eggs, wine, milk, &c. I shall here quote some of the words as they are in the original. “Chæræmon stoicus narrat de vita antiquorum Ægypti sacerdotum, quod omnibus mundi negotiis curisque postpositis semper in templo fuerint—nunquam mulieribus se miscuerint; nunquam cognatos et propinquos, ne liberos quidem, viderint ex eo tempore quo cæpissent divino cultui deservire, carnibus & vino se semper abstinuerint—maxime propter appetitus libidinis qui ex his cibis & ex hac potione nascuntur: pane raro vescebantur ne onerarent stomachum; & siquando

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\* See the inscriptions taken from the monuments and tombs of the ancient idolaters, by Blondus, a French historian of the 15th century, in his Roman Triumph, l. 2.

† Lib. 2. Contra Jovinianum.

comedebant, tusum pariter hyssopum sumebant in cibo ut escam graviorem illius calore decoquerent. Oleum tantum in oleribus noverant; verum & ipsum parum propter nauseam & asperitatem gustus leniendam. Quid loquar, inquit, de volatilibus? Cum ovum quoque pro carnibus vitaverint et lac; quorum alterum carnes liquidas, alterum sanguinem esse dicebant mutato colore."

The priests of Cybele were wont to drink of certain waters in Phrygia whereby they were so intoxicated that in their frenzy they castrated themselves; from whence they were called Semi-viri, half men. This discipline passed from the heathens to the Jews where, as Josephus\* and Pliny tell us,† it was adopted by the Essenes. Minutius Felix reproached the heathens of his time for their having temples or convents where no men, and others where no women were ever admitted. So great is the pleasure the devil finds in impurity, that he has banished from his profane altars the chaste and holy state of matrimony, which God himself provided as a remedy against incontinence.‡

3dly. The different orders of monks, friars nuns, &c. The heathens, beside their pontiffs, priests, and other inferior ministers, had convents or societies of religious men and women, who devoted themselves to, and took the name of some god or saint, whom they liked and whose institutes they

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\* Antiq. l. 18. c. 2.

† Hist. Nat. l. 5. c. 17.

‡ Luther by preaching against the celibacy of nuns, friars, &c. has to his immortal honour, not only trampled upon the whole body of heathenism and popery at once, but also approved himself a friend to the safety of national establishments and the general happiness of mankind; and restored discipline to the standard of the primitive times. The celibacy of bishops or any other was never commanded by our Saviour or any of the apostles. St. Paul only forbad simultaneous polygamy, a custom that generally prevailed in the eastern countries. He indeed recommended celibacy in those times of persecution, because it was no season for establishing a family; but still he left people free because even in such times it were better marry than burn.

adopted as a rule of their conduct. Thus they had their Quirinales, or the religious of the institute or order of Romulus; their Diales of the order of Jupiter; their Martiales of the order of Mars; their Vulcanales of the order of Vulcan; their Vulturales of the order of Vultur; their Florales of the order of Flora, &c. &c. They had also their friars or brothers of Augustus, of Adrian, of Anthony, of Aurelius, &c. They called themselves friars or brothers says Alexander\* of Alexander, because they were united to each other by charity and mutual alliance; they called themselves companions and associates, because they were all upon a level being incorporated in one society.

Some of those religious had certain foundations or endowments appointed for their support as Livy tells us,† the Quirinales and the Vestals had. Others were the mendicants, as the religious of the order of the mother of the gods, who as St. Austin says‡, made out an ignominious livelihood by begging in the streets and highways. Apuleius§ with a good deal of humour, describes their mendicant friars and detects their knavery and hypocrisy. He says that under pretext of devotion they begged and collected money, rundlets of wine, milk, cheese, wheat, barley, pulse, &c. that those sturdy beggars put what they got into wallets or bags which they carried away for that purpose, and that by thus rambling they plundered the country. Polydor Virgil, notwithstanding his being a papist, compares the four mendicant orders of his religion to the priests of Cybelle or mother of the gods. “Posterity, says he,|| are more tenacious of bad than good institutions, as may be proved by many instances, and particularly by

\* Gehial. lib. 1. c. 26.

† Lib. 1.

‡ Deci vit. dei. 1. 7. c. 6.

§ Metam. 1. 8.

|| De invent. rerum. 1. 7. c. 7.



the tricks practised by the mendicant rambles. There were, says he, among the ancients a set of people, who under an appearance of religion, rambled from province to province to gather money and other things. Those religious rambles carried images of the gods with them, and made the people believe that the gods would be favourable to all such as gave them charity. There is likewise at this day, says he, a sect of impostors, who will not work to earn their bread; who assume an air of sanctity to disguise the corruption of their hearts; who perfectly resemble the priests of Cybele, and who by an hypocritical piety call themselves the servants of all the saints. Expert in all the arts and craft of the begging trade, they ramble about from town to town, and from village to village, rooking the simple and ignorant out of their money on pretence of building a church, of buying clothes, or supporting the poor, or redeeming captives, or the like. By such methods they extort from one a sheep, a lamb or some wool; from another a hen and some eggs; from another a pig or a gammon of bacon; from another cheese, linen or the like. And to impose on the credulity of the poor ignorant people, they draw out a box of relics, or apostolic letters, or signatures worn out with age, or by being often handled, and present them with ceremony and veneration to be kissed by such as give them any thing, promising them at the same time that they shall be everlastingly rewarded in heaven, for their generous and charitable benevolence.

Ludovicus Vives, a Spanish divine, cries out thus\* "What would not St. Austin say in our days, if he saw very rich and wealthy societies calling for alms, to people to whom they ought rather to give

\* In his commentaries on the passage of St. Austin's book of the city of God, where this doctor speaks of the mendicant priests of Cybele., l. 7. c. 6.

some of the superfluities they abound with. The poor man from whom they receive alms, has nothing perhaps at home to eat but brown bread and a little greens, and nothing to drink but water : whereas the rich beggar who takes the alms, fills himself with white bread, partridge, capon, &c. and drinks the best of wine." From what I have hitherto alleged, it is plain, the learned and sensible part of the Romanists themselves laugh at this heathen mummerly that is practiced in their church.

4thly. Their vows of poverty are likewise from the same source. Lactantius tells us,\* that the heathen philosophers were wont to distribute their substance to the poor, and renounce all pleasures in order to qualify themselves for the practice of virtue and self-abnegation. Thus, Antisthenes according to St. Jerome,† sold all that he had, except his cloak, and gave it to the poor. His disciple Diogenes, in order to devote himself to meditation, gave to the poor all that he had, except a wallet, a goblet and a walking staff. Crates, the philosopher,‡ as he was going to Athens, to apply himself to the study of wisdom, threw a great sum of money, he had, into the sea, from a persuasion that he could not reconcile virtue with riches. The stoics were most lavish in their encomiums upon poverty, and the advantages of it. "Would you, says Seneca to his friend Yucilius, stock your understanding with sublime conceptions? Be poor, or live poor. Lie constantly upon a wad of straw. Wear hair-cloth, and live upon brown bread. Let us learn in time what poverty is, for, he only is worthy of God who knows how to despise riches." This is daubing indeed! Se-

\* L. 1. c. 1.

† Lib. 2. advers. Jovin.

‡ Hieron. Ep. 14. ad Paului. editionis Petri canisii Parisiis, 1588. lib. 3. in Math. c. 19.

neca in the midst of luxury and plenty, recommends poverty, and boasts of the advantages of it ! And is not it so with our modern votaries of poverty ? Need any man eat and drink and wear, &c. better than they do ? May not they say with the parasite in Terence,\* “ I possess every thing though I possess nothing ; I have nothing and yet I want for nothing ? ” The Stoics were followed in this by the Essenians among the Jews, who, as Pliny says,† were “ a set of hermits without women, without money, without marriages, without births ; and yet, strange as it is, this set has subsisted these many ages past ; ” and afterwards by the Manichees, who, as St. Austin says,‡ boasted that they had abdicated all property ; that they had no money along with them ; that they were content with their daily bread ; that they were never solicitous about food or raiment, and, that they never troubled their heads about future contingencies. These were the patriarchs of the mendicant friars, who, by their vows of poverty have entailed upon themselves the curse that David denounced against his enemies, in the following words,§ “ Let their children be continually vagabonds, and beg : let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.”

Mankind, in the general, are no less prone to laziness and indolence, than passionately fond of idolatrous pageantry, and mystical superstition. Accordingly, we find that wherever the one advanced and prevailed, the other brought up the rear. Hence, it is, that as the rites of the heathen worship, got no established sanction in the church before the days of Constantine the great, solemn vows and professions of monkery were not known among christians before his time. But

\* In Eunuch.

† Hist. Nat. l. 5. and 17.

‡ Contra Faustum l. 5. c. 1.

§ Psalm 109. 10.



when he began to introduce the heathen rites into the church, his example proved so contagious, that in half a century the christian religion wore quite a different aspect from what it did the three first centuries. For in those first ages, the church had no images nor altars, nor sacrifice nor incense, as Minutius Felix testifies, who wrote his Octavius towards the beginning of the third century. But, in the course of the fourth century, we find those heathen institutions crowding very thick into the church, under the sanction of the imperial example. So true it is that *regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis*. It was in this century that the heathen monkery was first revived in the persons of Anthony the abbot and Paul the hermit. By them it was established in the East. But in the West it got no footing before the days of abbot Benedict, who died in the year 543.

As a further proof that the monastic and savage life of hermits, &c. was not known in the first ages of the church, that it is no more than an imitation of the heathens, and an effect of their hypocondriac passion for woods and deserts, I shall add what Tertullian says in his apology for the christian religion. "We live in the world. We eat and drink and wear as others do. We have been bred like each other. The necessities of life are common to us all, for we are not like the Indian bramins or gymnosophists. We do not retire into woods and mountains. We do not deprive ourselves of the necessities of life. We refuse none of the good things which God has created for the use of man. We do not separate ourselves from the commerce of society." Those gymnosophists of whom Tertullian speaks, were a sect of monks or hermits who lived in desert places and led a most austere life. St. Austin speaks thus of them: "They abstain from women. They go naked.

They fix their eyes upon the sun, and very often continue in that attitude from morning until night. They sometimes stand a whole day upon burning sands, bearing sometimes on one foot and sometimes on the other. They bear heat and cold with incredible patience." We may look upon Diogenes the cynic, surnamed the dog, to be one of the chief founders of these austerities. For he had no house but a tub, no covering day or night but his cloak, no granary but his wallet, and lived upon what he got by begging. In the scorching heat of summer he would lie on the burning sands, and in winter embrace statues covered with snow.

5thly. Abstinence from certain meats and other religious austerities practised in the church of Rome, are all copied after the heathens. The Indian bramins to this day receive none into their order, but such as make a vow of abstaining from flesh and wine. Seneca tells us, that Epicurus fasted on certain days without taking any nourishment at all. The Egyptian priests always abstained from flesh, wine, eggs, milk, &c. as I observed before. They lay upon the ground having no bed but the leaves of trees, nor pillow but a bench or form. They sometimes fasted two or three days without taking any thing. The Indian gymnosophists eat nothing but apples, rice and meal. The priest of Jupiter in the isle of Crete or Candia, abstained from flesh and all boiled victuals. These and several other instances of the kind may be seen in St. Jerome,\* Porphyry,† and other authors. Add to this the decree of the Roman senate mentioned by Livy,‡ whereby fasts were ordered in honour of the goddess Ceres to implore her blessing upon the corn-tillage.

Now though it is visible that the abstinential rigours and severities which are practised in the

lib. 2. adversus Jovin.

† Lib. 4. de abstin.

‡ L. 35

church of Rome, are but a continuation of the practices of the heathens, yet, it seems, the Romanists glory in it. For when the heathens began to boast that the perfection and sanctity of their several orders of men and women were superior to any other; that their clergy never married; that they had no property: that they eat no meat, and drank no wine; nor took any thing that would enflame concupiscence; that their vestals or nuns led a life of the greatest purity; that they had set-forms of prayer which they repeated so many times a day; that they had their festivities, processions, pilgrimages, wells, and other penitential stations; that they had their holy-water with which they sprinkled themselves as often as they went in or out of their temples: that when their temples were profaned by strangers, they purified them and their magistrates and cities by sprinkling them with holy water; that they mortified themselves by fasting, praying, cutting their flesh, &c. that, when their bells were tolled, the congregation often consisting of thirty thousand persons, would prostrate themselves on the ground and repeat their prayers, adorations, &c. the christians hereupon took fire and in sometime equaled, I had almost said exceeded, the heathens themselves. Hence the barbarous custom among the primitive christians of maiming and disfiguring themselves by way of mortification; some cutting off their noses; others the tops of their fingers; others biting off their tongues and spitting them, blood and all, into women's faces; others plucking out their eyes; others rolling themselves in brakes of briars; and others even emasculating themselves to suppress all emotions of concupiscence.

We are told in a pompous romantic strain that Maccarius, a monk of Alexandria, eat nothing in lent but herbs, and that only once a week; that



in Põntus, as Gregory Nazainzen says, some fasted twenty days and nights successively without tasting any thing; that when Simon the stylite was but a young man he tasted nothing but once a week, and that he fasted eight and twenty lents without tasting any thing from the beginning of lent to the end of it; that Paul the hermit lived upon the fruit of a palm-tree and a bit of bread that a raven brought him every day; that Hilary lived upon fifteen figs a day for six years; that St. Genovefa of Paris lived thirty-five years upon barley bread; that several have lived eight and thirty years without tasting any liquid; that some lived upon grass in the fields and woods along with the cattle, as is recorded of St. Catharine of Cardonnna in Spain, of the order of the Carmelites.

They glory likewise in the flagelations and other penitential severities practised in convents and elsewhere, though they are all of the same stamp with the rest. When the priests of Baal\* found their prayers were not heard they cut and slashed themselves with knives and lancets, in order, by such acts of mortification and religion, to attonne for their sins, to appease their God, and move him to grant their petitions. Tertullian tells us† that the priests of the goddess Bellona drew their blood by cutting &c. and gathering it in the palms of their hands sprinkled the idol therewith. Those barbarous acts of religion are continued still among the heathens as may be seen in Sumatra, an island in the East Indies, where, when the king and people assemble on certain festivals about their patron-idol, some run about the idol like enthusiasts, and slash themselves with knives, for which they are afterwards carried in procession upon men's shoulders, and from thenceforth esteemed as divine men and saints upon earth.

\* 1 Kings 18.

† Apol., o. 9.

Tertullian tells us also, that in his time there was a feast held at Lacedemon where young men and boys were whipped to death upon an altar by way of sacrifice to, and placating, their gods. There was scarce a country upon earth where human sacrifices were not offered to the gods. The valley of Gehenna near Jerusalem is noted for the many sacrifices of little children that were burned alive there in honour of the god Molock.

Herodotus tells us\* that when the Egyptians offered sacrifice to Osyris, they cut and slashed themselves with scourges. This custom says Polydore Virgil, lib. 7. cap. 6. was continued among the old Romans at the feast of the Lupercalia, where people marched in procession in a penitential dress with whips in their hands which they exercised on themselves and others† Plutarch tells us, in his life of Numa Pompilius, that, when any of the vestals or nuns were guilty of a breach of their vow, they were shut up in dungeons or caves and there left till they perished. Nay there were several priests and vestals burnt alive on the score of religion. These and the like barbarities made Minitius Felix and others cry out and say: "O! ye heathens what infatuation, what frenzy has seized upon you, that you thus dishonour yourselves on pretence of honouring your gods? You supplicate your gods with the mouths of your wounds. It were better to have no religion at all than be of such a religion. Certainly those who are guilty of such fanatical excesses must be lost to all reason and common sense."

\* in Euterpe.

† Plutarch in his life of Romulus owns that the original of the ceremonies of the Lupercalia is difficult to be guessed at. Though he does not expressly say that the people lashed themselves at that feast, yet it must be allowed they did what was practised in the East from whence they borrowed the feast.

These are the predecessors of our modern conventuals and penitents, or rather mummers and fanatics who go bare-headed and bare-footed; who, with ropes about their necks, and chains about their bodies, tear their flesh with hooks, scourges, &c. who roll themselves naked in snow, as St. Francis did, and embracing the balls call them their wives and servant-maids; who make vows of eternal silence as the Carthusians, in imitation of Pythagoras's disciples do, whereby they become as dumb as the fish they live upon; who cut off their noses, bite off their tongues, pluck out their eyes, &c. &c.

I have hinted before, that there was scarce a nation upon earth where human sacrifices were not offered to the gods, and sometimes to the devils to appease their wrath and avert their malice. This, like the other barbarous customs of the heathens, has been adopted by the church of Rome. For, beside the sacrifice they make of the poor offending conventuals that they thrust into holes and dungeons (one of which has been taken out of his cave in my time in Paris, by people that were sinking the foundation of a house) there are holocausts of men and women daily offered to God and the devil at once, on the flaming altars of the Inquisition. And, as the civil laws have no where degenerated so far as to suffer them to sacrifice little children in this world, they sacrifice them in the other, and consign all such as die without baptism to the devil, to the flames of hell to all eternity.\*

Lastly, the fashion of the cowls and frocks or habits of monks, &c. was borrowed from the heathens as may be seen in a letter. St. Jerome wrote to a devout female acquaintance of his called Eustochium, wherein he cautions her against this

\* Vide Aug. Greg. Mag. Fulgent. &c.



pagan mummary, " Let not your dress, says he, be either affected, or slatternly, or remarkable for any singularity, lest you may be pointed at by every one that passes by. There are some women, says he, who deface themselves in order to appear mortified; who, as soon as they are spoken to, weep, look down and hide their faces. They dress in black, and wear a girdle of sack-cloth about their loins. They affect to have dirty hands and feet. They wear hair-cloth next to their skin, and frocks or habits industriously fashioned to signify that they are returned to the state of infant-innocence. To see them thus muffled up you would take them to be so many bats and owls." Again he says: " Lest people may think that I preach only against women, I advise you to shun those men whom you see girded about with iron-chains, who wear long beards like buck-goats, who wear black cloaks and go bare-foot. All these things are the devil's devices. These people creep into the houses of the rich and impose upon silly women laden with sins. They counterfeit a sorrowful mien, and pretend to fast long though they take care to fill themselves by night privately."

Now though it is evident from the authority of St. Jerome, Minutius Felix, Socrates the historian, and several others, that this religious mummary was first practised by and borrowed from, the old heathen philosophers and other fanatics, yet so ingenious men are to excuse and defend what they ought to renounce and condemn, that Bellarmin, in his treatise of monks, apologizes for it, saying their cowls and habits denote the simplicity and infant innocence to which they desire to return. For, says he, while children are at the breast they are covered with veils like frocks or habits.

## THE MASS, ITS RITES AND CEREMONIES, &c.

The word Mass is by corruption of the word *Missio* from the old Romans, who, in imitation of the Egyptians, dismissed the religious assemblies with these words: *Ite Missio est*, or, *I, licet*; as may be seen in the eleventh chapter of Apuleius's *Metamorphosis*. It is from the ancient Romans and Egyptians, says Polydore Virgil,\* that our people have borrowed the custom of making the deacon say at the conclusion of our mysteries; *Ite missa est*, i. e. ye may all retire.

The doctrine of the church of Rome is, that the mass is a propitiatory sacrifice, that it is the centre of spiritual exercises; the soul of a devout life; a sacrament to which all others are subordinate; an unbloody sacrifice whereby all other sacrifices are accomplished and fulfilled; a sea from whence all grace derives its source and where all devotion ends; the most excellent homage that earth can pay to heaven, or the creature to the Creator; the most august of all actions imaginable, and the most sublime oblation that can be made to the eternal Father.

Now this pretended sacrifice so pompously celebrated and so magnificently extolled is, after all, only a continuation of an unbloody sacrifice instituted by the old heathens. Tibullus in the fourth elegy of his third book and elsewhere tells us, that bread was offered in sacrifice to the gods, *farre pio*,† &c. *parvaque cælestes pacavit mica*.‡ Nay every one that is acquainted with Virgil and Horace, and other classic authors must own, that cakes made of the purest wheat-flour, and wine, and incense were offered in sacrifice by the hea-

\* 1. 5. c. 12.

† Lib. 3. eleg. 4.

‡ Lib. 4. ad Messalam.

thens. As to the libations, there were several places where water only was used ; but when wine was introduced it was sometimes mixed with water to unite both libations in one. And as to the form of the cakes, they were thin and round like the Romish hosts or water-cakes as may be proved not only by the word *mola* a cake (from whence we have the verb *immolo* to sacrifice) but also by the confession of the popish writers themselves. Alexander of Alexander, a Neapolitan who flourished in the fifteenth century, speaks thus. "Numa Pompilius was the first that instituted the unbloody sacrifice, and ordered that no sacrifice should be offered without pure fresh flour." Pythagoras taught that no living creature ought to be offered to the gods, but that they should be contented with bread or flour. For which reason the Romans have adopted the custom of the Egyptians who placated their gods, not with the slaughter of animals, but with hosts or cakes of bread." Win. du Choul, one of the French king's council, wrote a treatise of the religion of the ancient Romans, printed at Lyons, anno 1556, wherein among other points of conformity between ancient and modern Rome, he observes that "the old Romans eat standing in their temples (as the popish priests do still) and made use of little round breads or cakes like those that are used at the Lord's supper on Holy Thursday in the great church of Lyons." The Roman ritual orders the priests to wash their hands before they go to the altar. The same was practised by the old heathen priests, as Eustathius tells us, in his comments on the first book of the Iliad. Hesiod orders that the priests should wash their hands before they offered wine to Jupiter. And Virgil tells us that Æneas durst not handle his gods, which he was for rescuing from the flames of Troy, until he had prepared himself for it by ablution.



It was usual with the heathen priests to confess their sins before they approached the altar, and to beg pardon of the gods and goddesses and all the saints. Numa Pompilius gave it in strict charge to the priests to prepare themselves in this manner, as thinking that the sacrifice could not be duly celebrated, if the priest has not first purged his conscience by confession. This conformity between the modern and ancient priests has been remarked by Counsellor du Choul.\* Who says the ancient priests repeated a whole string of gods and goddesses to whom they confessed publicly as the modern priests do in the *Confietor deo* or general confession.

Numa Pompilius, as Alexander of Alexander tells us†, ordered that the priest, who was to perform the sacrifice, should wear an orarium or amict upon his head, a white long shirt called an alb, a tunic called a chasuble or cope of various colours, &c.

The same Numa, as Plutarch observes in his life, ordered the sacrificing priests to take several turns, and make several rounds about the altar, whether to represent the circular motion of the heavens, or as the temples stood east and west, to oblige the priest who enters the temple with his face towards the east, to turn towards the west, as soon as he comes up to the chancel, and then back again to the east performing the whole of his prayers to that God who is maker of the universe. (see Plutarch.) And, as often as the priest turned about to the congregation, he first clapped his hand to his mouth. All these several turns and rounds are performed by the popish priests from one corner of the altar to the other. When they turn about to say the *Orate fratres* they perform the whole circle round. And before they turn about to say the *Dominus vobiscum* they clap both

their hands to their mouths. This conformity is acknowledged by Counsellor du Choul and Polydore Virgil. The former says : \* “ When the heathen priests offered sacrifice they put their hands to their mouths and turned as the priests of our religion do.” The latter says : † “ The pagan priests turned about where they offered sacrifice, and chiefly when they delivered the responses of the oracles and when they were moved by the pretended spirit of inspiration. ’Tis from them without any manner of doubt, that we have got the custom of turning about at the altar.”

The pretended sacrifice of the Mass is not to be celebrated but in the forenoon for this reason, as Thomas of Aquin says, because our Saviour declared ‡ that when the night cometh no man can work, and therefore that we must work while it is day. Nay it is the common opinion of the Romish doctors that it is a mortal sin to say Mass in the afternoon. Now all this is but daubing ; for the true reason is, because the heathens performed their sacrifices in the forenoon as Counsellor du Choul acknowledges in the following words : § “ ’Twas an established custom among the Egyptians to salute the gods in the forenoon. This circumstance of performing divine service in the morning has been observed by such of our religion as say mattins and keep the same hours that the Egyptians did, viz. the first hour, the second hour and the third hour, which we call prime, tierce, and sex.” || And again he says : “ The pagan priests performed their solemn prayers and de-

\* Page 275. † De invent. rerum, l. 5. c. 11. ‡ John, 9. 4. § Page 309.

|| As the form of the Roman breviary was taken from the heathen calendar, and offices of saints or gods and goddesses, it must not seem strange that like theirs, it should be stuffed with romantic lies and fictions. The court of Rome has been often solicited to retrench those fables and reform the breviary ; but her answer always was, that to take such a step would be giving public and solemn sanction to the protestant reformation

votions in the morning, as thinking that it was the fittest time for offering sacrifice, and that the gods were present at that time in the temples to hear their prayers."

It was usual with the heathens, when they offered sacrifices, to employ organs, flutes, and other musical instruments. For, "no sacrifice without music" was a common saying among the heathens, Strabo tells us, that when the priests of Cybele offered sacrifice, they employed the sound of drums and cymbals, which made Arnobius cry out against them in the following strain: "What! do your gods take pleasure in music? Are they diverted to hear the sound of cymbals and drums? Do they think it is doing them an honour to give them a Saraband? Is this capable of appeasing their wrath when they are in a passion?" Hence it is plain there was no music in churches in Arnobius's time.\*

The Roman ritual expressly directs to keep several lamps, at least one, lighted before the altar. Accordingly this is punctually observed in all popish churches. Fire was one of the most ancient and universal symbols of the divinity. This symbol was in use throughout all the East. The *prytanea* of the Greeks were so many *foci* perpetu-

Whoever looks upon himself, to be obliged, upon pain of damnation, to read such legendary thrash every day, digne attente, ac devote as it is commanded in the breviary, confirms, the judgment of the French poet:

"De tous les animaux qui marchent sur la Terre,  
Qui volent en l' air, ou Nagent dans la Mer,  
Du Perou au Japon, de Paris Jusqu a Rome,  
Le plus sot animal, a mon à vis, c'est l'homme.

\* I am far from condemning the use of vocal or instrumental music in churches. But as it would be superstitious to build churches in one situation rather than another, to dedicate them to angels or saints, to think they would not be fit for divine service unless consecrated, and that the prayers of the faithful would be more available there than, for instance, in the open air; so it would be heathenish and superstitious to use the music of bells or the like for the purpose of softening or flattering the Deity, adoring the host, worshipping angels or saints, chasing away fairies and other airy beings, &c.



ally burning. The vesta\* of the Hetrurians, the Sabines, and Romans was no other. As this fire happened sometimes to go out, there was a ceremony instituted for renewing it with solemnity once a year, as is practised still in the church of Rome on every Easter Saturday. The use of this symbol was like all the rest, carried to superstition. For, according to Pythagoras's maxims, no ceremony was to be performed without torches, flambeaux and other lights. Even the dead were not buried without them as Virgil says of Pallantus; *lucet via longo ordine flammarum*. The use of lamps in temples, whereof the Egyptians, according to Clement of Alexandria, were the first inventors, became so common among the heathens, that it was laughed at by the fathers of the three first centuries as a ridiculous superstition. Thus Lactantius speaks of this custom:† “If they (the heathens) would but contemplate that splendor that we call the Sun, they would be convinced that God has no occasion of lamps, considering that it was he that created that living and refulgent light for the use of man. If that small globe, which on account of its distance, does not appear bigger than a man's head, be so effulgently bright that we could not look at it long without losing our sight, what brightness, what splendors must not there be in the presence of God? How then can they be in their right senses, who offer to the author and giver of light the faint flimsy glimmer of our tapers and flambeaux?”

The custom of lighting candles, &c. by daylight on a religious principle, was so far from being known among christians before the great

\* *Eshtho* or *eshtha* in Hebrew signifies fire, which by prefixing the conjunction copulative *vau* makes *veshtho* from whence we have the word *vesta*. Accordingly Ovid says: *nec tu aliud vestam nisi vivam intellige stammam*.

† Lib. 6. c. 2

area of christian corruption the fourth century, that St. Jerome highly resented the charge made upon him and his party by Vigilantius, who complained that in his time this superstitious ceremony was introduced into some churches. For, says he, we see that under a pretext of religion, the heathen custom of lighting flambeaux by day is introduced into the church. Is it not, says he, doing great honour to the martyrs, who are illuminated by all the effulgence that blazes round the throne of the lamb of God, to pretend to light them with your vile tapers and candles? To which St. Jerome answers thus :\* "We light no candles by day as you falsely accuse us---and if there be any that do so they do it in honour of the martyrs, in condescension to the ignorance and simplicity of the common people, or to gratify some female bigots of whom it may be said with truth, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." This indiscreet zeal of silly women, &c. induced the council, that was held about the year 325, at Eliberis or Elvira in Spain, to pronounce an anathema against all such as should from thenceforth carry lighted candles by day into a church-yard, lest, as the council alleged, the souls of the saints who were buried there, might be disturbed by such lights.

At every high mass that is said in the church of Rome there is incense offered which must be first blessed by the priest, who, when he is incensed by the deacon, takes the censer and incenses, the book and altar, and also the bread and wine in the course of the ceremony, by performing several magic circles about them. This was another old heathen custom. Nay it was the distinguishing character of the heathen religion, and the test the heathens made use of to discover the

\* Lib adversus Vigil cereos clā : a luce non accendimus ut tu crimināris.

christians by, in order to put them to death. Such christians as offered incense along with the heathens were called *Thurificati*, and were according to St. Cyprian, obliged to undergo a long and severe penance before they were received back into the church. The case of pope Marcellinus is notorious. Though he knew that offering incense to idols was an open profession of the heathen religion, yet he was so pusillanimous, and, as he owned himself, so mercenary that he did it; for which he was afterwards condemned. When the christian soldiers, who through ignorance offered incense along with the heathens in the reign of Julian the apostate, were told that by that action they solemnly professed the heathen religion, they ran immediately through the streets crying out that they were christians, that they had been deceived by the emperor, and that they were ready to atone for their mistake by shedding the last drop of their blood. This ceremony of offering incense was looked upon by the heathens as a very proper means for appeasing their gods. Accordingly Ovid says in his *Ephemerology* :

*Sæpe Jovem vidi cum jam sua mittere vellet  
Fulmina, thure dato sustinuisse manum.*

Alexander of Alexander says\* that the Egyptians used to appease their Gods, not with the blood of victims but, with prayers and incense. Wherefore Arnobius puts this question to the pagans of his time : “ We ask you by what means and how long is it since you began to understand the virtue of incense, so well that you can believe with foundation that it ought to be offered to the gods, and that they will be pleased with it ? ”

In the church of Rome it is customary, every Sunday especially, to exercise or bless some salt

\* Genial. l 2, c. 22.



and water wherewith the priest sprinkles himself first, and then the altar and congregation. This holy-water (as they call it) is deemed to have such a sanctifying virtue in it that it is used upon almost every occasion. They will not taste flesh meat on Easter Sunday, 'till it is sprinkled with this water. New fruits, new houses, new beds, &c. are sprinkled with it. The common people keep a bottle of it in their houses to sprinkle themselves and their chambers with it, in order to chase away the fairies and other imaginary evil spirits. And if, in their sleep, one of them chance to be seized with a stagnation of blood commonly called the night-mare, the other who hears him groan, immediately sprinkles him with this water, in order to drive away the incubus or wicked angel. The popish divines say, that this water has the virtue of cleaning them from their sins, and of chasing away evil spirits, of curing diseases, of preventing blights, mildews, blasts, &c. in orchards, corn-fields and the like.\* Accordingly they use it for all these several purposes of which I am myself a living witness. Now all this is copied from the heathens who had the same high

\* Deus qui ad Salutem humani generis maxima quæque Sacramenta in aquarum Substantia condidisti, adesto propitius invocationibus nostris & elemento huic multimodis purificationibus præparato virtutem tuæ benedictionis infunde, ut creatura tua mysteriis tuis serviens ad abigendos demones morbosque pellendos divinæ gratiæ sumat effectum, ut, quicquid in domibus vel in locis fidelium hæc unda resperserit, careat omni immunditia, liberetur a Noxa, non illiç resideat Spiritus pestilens, non aura corrumpens; discedant omnes insidiæ latentis inimici. Et si quid est quod aut incolunitati habitantium invidet aut quieti aspersione hujus aquæ effugiat ut Salubritas — expetita ab omnibus sit impugnationibus defensa, &c.

*Rituale Rom. de consecr. aquæ.*

Pope Alexander the first, has the following words: Aquam Sale conspersam populis benedicimus ut ea cuncti-aspersi sanctificentur & purificentur Quod et omnibus sacerdotibus sciendum esse mandamus——quanto magis divinis precibus sacratus sal sterilitatem rerum auferat humanarum & coinquinatos sanctificat atque mundat & purgat, & cætera bona multiplicat, & insidias Diaboli avertit, & a phantasmatum Versutiis homines defendit.

*Disi 3. Can. 20. de Consecr.*

opinion of their holy water, which they called *aqua lustralis* or *expiatoria*, on account of the virtue they ascribed to it of expiating and purifying every thing that was sprinkled with it. The sea-water or water mixed with salt, says the poet Euripides, washes away the sins of all men. Blondus tells us,\* that at a certain gate in Rome called Capena, now *porta di S. Sebastiano*, there was some consecrated water with which the people, repairing to it every day with laurel branches in their hands, sprinkled themselves, from a persuasion that it had the virtue of expiating their sins, especially all lies and perjuries. Justin Martyr says in his second apology, that the gentiles when they went into their temples, sprinkled themselves with water, and then presented their perfumes and offerings to the gods. Theodoret says,† that Julian, surnamed the apostate, ordered the bread, meat, and every thing that was sold at the market to be sprinkled with the *aqua lustralis* or holy water. This he did because it was an essential ceremony of the heathen religion into which he relapsed. Tertullian, in his treatise of baptism, says, that the pagans used to sprinkle their cities, towns, temples, houses, &c. with holy water. *Villas, domos, templa, totasque Urbes aspergine circulatæ aquæ expiant passim*. But as this superstitious ceremony is laughed at by many christians, so it was by many of the heathens themselves. Thus Ovid, speaking of Peleus who, when he was sprinkled with holy-water by Acastus thought he was thereby absolved from the guilt of his brother's murder, exclaims against that superstition in the following words

*Ah Nimum faciles qui tristia Crimina Cædis  
fluminea tolli posse putatis aqua.*

This is confirmed by what Cato said, viz. "That he could not conceive how two priests could look

\* Rem. triumph. l. 2.

† Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 14.

at each other without laughing." So palpable (to all sensible men) was the cheat they put upon the poor ignorant people.

It is usual with popes, when they go out into the country, to have their host or wafer carried before them as a guard and protection. I myself often saw the cross carried before the archbishop of Paris in his coach. And it is well known that popish armies have been, more than once routed upon the disgrace their patron-idol received, in their van, from a Protestant cannon-ball. This is no more than the superstitious mummary practised by the heathens as may be seen in the seventh of the acts of the apostles, where St. Stephen says, that the Jews, when they fell into idolatry, carried the tabernacle of Molock before them by way of guard, as the jesuit Sanctus proves in his notes on this passage. "The tabernacle, says he, was a certain case or shrine wherein Molock was carried in solemn pomp, and which the Jews, in imitation of the Gentiles, took along with them thro' devotion and for their protection wherever they went. Now that it was usual with the heathens to carry tutelar gods along with them as companions and conductors of their voyages, we learn from Servius on the following verse of the sixth of the Eneid: *errantesque deos agitataque Numina Trojæ*. And I do not believe it was for any other reason that Rachel stole her father's gods, or that gods were carried by Jacob's servants as they went out of the Mesopotamia.\* It was on this account that Laban so easily discovered his gods had been stolen from him, because he was for taking a walk abroad, and, looking for his gods to take them with him as usual, missed them. Now Jacob seems to have intimated the reason the servants had for carrying their gods with them, when he says that God was the companion

\* Gen. 35.



of his journey; as if he had said that they ought not to carry these gods who were rather so many scandals and stumbling-blocks than guides in their journey: and that there is only one faithful guide he that conducted him in his long and perilous journey."

The heathens believed that the sovereign gods dwelt in heaven; for which reason they were called *Cœlicolæ*, inhabitants of heaven. And, notwithstanding, they believed that those gods often descended upon earth, mixed with mortals, were sometimes wounded &c. as may be seen in the battles of the gods described by Homer and others, who tell us of the *immortal* blood that issued from their wounds. The Romanists likewise believe, that Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God; and still that he comes down every day upon earth by virtue of the consecration of the eucharist: that he may be wounded in the host, and lose some of his *immortal* blood, witness the famous host that is preserved still at Dijon in Burgundy, on which may be seen the gashes that a Jew gave it with a knife, as also the drops of blood that gushed out of the wounds. I have myself seen in Paris in the cloister of the Carmelites called *des Billettes*, the figure of a host upon the wall distilling drops of blood, that, it is pretended, were drawn from it by a Jew represented underneath with a rod in his hand.

The Fathers of the primitive church reproached the heathens for pretending to make their gods, and adoring the work of their own hands. Thus Lactantius\*: "they revere and adore," says he, "the clay that was fashioned by their own hands." And St. Jerome on the 113th psalm: "you therefore make with your hands," says he, "a God that you adore." Now, it is certain that the heathens adored not the idols themselves, but the gods or

some supernatural or divine power that they believed, had been introduced into the idols by virtue of the consecration. So saith Arnobius.\* “They force their gods, by virtue of the consecration, to enter into the idols and unite themselves with them.” Now I appeal to any man if the same thing be not taught and practised in the church of Rome. She makes the bread herself, and pretends to force or command Jesus Christ, by virtue of the consecration, to enter into, and clothe himself with it. For according to her doctrine† let a priest be never so wicked, yet, if he has an intention to consecrate, our Saviour must obey his words, and immediately present himself in the sacrament. Witness what happened in Paris some years ago: A priest passing thro’ a bread-market pronounced the words of consecration upon every loaf that was there; a report being made thereof to the clergy, orders were immediately issued for seizing upon, and burning, all the bread that was found in that market. *Spectatum admissi!*

By what I have just said, joined to what I observed before, under the article of image-worship and elsewhere, it is evident to demonstration that Minutius Felix, Arnobius, Tertullian, Lactantius, and the rest of the fathers, that argued against the heathen consecration and adoration of images, knew nothing of the doctrine of our modern consecration: otherwise the heathens might have retorted all their arguments upon themselves, and

\* Contra gentes l. 6.

† Principio docet sancta synodus — in alio sancto eucharistiæ sacramento, post panis & vini consecrationem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, verum Deum atque hominem, vere, realiter ac substantialiter sub specie illarum rerum sensibilibus contineri. Concil. Trid. sess. 13. cap. 1.

Si quis negaverit in sanctissimæ eucharistiæ sacramento contineri, vere, realiter, & substantialiter corpus & sanguinem una cum anima & divinitate Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ac proinde totum Christum; sed dixerit, tantummodo esse in eo ut in signo vel figura aut virtute, anathema sit. Ibid. Can. 1.

proved them to be so many quibbling sophisters. For, as Arnobius confesses in the above-cited book, the heathens did not adore copper, gold, silver or other materials, whereof the images were made, nor did they believe them to be gods or deities that deserved adoration; but in these images or materials adored, what sacred consecration introduced and caused to dwell in them. Now if those fathers professed what the Romanists do, and had altars, and unbloody sacrifices, miraculous consecrations, &c. the heathens might have answered them thus: "you christians reproach us for worshipping the work of men's hands, things that cannot see, hear, taste, smell, breathe, speak or move; things exposed to age rust, corruptions, dust, breaking, burning, &c. to the injuries of worms, mice, &c. subject to be locked up, stolen and the like, though we tell you that what we really adore is not subject to any of those inconveniences, viz. the gods that are introduced into them by virtue of the consecration. But are not you yourselves guilty of these very charges you make upon us? you make your host, you mould it, fashion it, bake it in an oven, you consecrate it, you bring your Christ into it by virtue of the consecration, and then you adore it though it neither sees, nor hears, nor tastes, nor smells, nor breathes, nor walks, nor moves: though it is subject to age, dust, breaking, burning; to mice, worms, &c. and as liable to be stolen as any thing else? the heathens certainly would have made those charges upon the christians if they had the least open for so doing. But, as they never did, it is evident to demonstration, that the primitive christians were strangers to the pretended effects of our modern consecrations.

The same fathers laughed at the heathens for locking up their gods for fear they should be sto-



len. Thus Arnobius in the above-cited book: "why do you keep your gods locked up, says he? is it for fear that robbers might carry them off by night? if you are sure they are gods leave them to take care of themselves; let their temples be always open." But if the modern belief, and practice of locking up the eucharist, had been known among the primitive christians, the heathens would have retorted the charge upon themselves. Indeed locking up those false gods has been found necessary. For as Laban's gods were stolen from him, so is the wafer-god very often carried away for the sake of the gold and silver shrines it is locked up in.

The heathens concealed their mysteries from the public, and forbad to speak of them before such as were not initiated. "They hide their shame," says Tertullian.\* And Gregory Nazianzen says:† "The eleusinian mysteries are things that are concealed and deserve to be concealed." The same thing is practised in the church of Rome. The catechism of the council of Trent,‡ treating of the virtue of consecration, says; that "those things are explained for parish priests, not in order to let the faithful into the knowledge of those sublime mysteries (except in a case of great necessity) seeing it is not expedient to let those, who are not initiated, into the secret of the mysteries of religion." The canon of the mass is ordered to be read so low that even the clerk is not to hear what the priest says. So jealous are they of their old heathen original, that all such priests as read the canon audibly, are called jansenists and heretics. There was nothing mystical in the service our Saviour performed at the last supper. Accordingly nothing can be more plain and intelligible than the whole Protestant liturgy. The minister makes even the most ignorant person in the congregation judge of

\* Contra Valentin. c. 1. † Orat 39. ‡ De Euch. c. 19.

every thing he says and does. Even when he breaks the bread, he is ordered to do it in sight of the whole assembly. So averse are Protestants to all religious juggling and mysterious mummercy.

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## PROCESSIONS.

One of the most solemn ceremonies in the church of Rome, and that which is performed with the greatest pomp and pageantry, is, the procession of the sacrament on the day called *Corpus Christi*. That this ceremony has been introduced into the christian religion, in imitation of the heathens, Counsellor de Choul acknowledges in these words: "When the priests of the mother of the gods went in procession, making their supplications in the streets, they carried the idol of Jupiter, and laid him down from time to time at certain stages, where they had prepared altars or resting places for the purpose, which is practised still in France, on the day of *Corpus Christi*."

Let any man who is acquainted with what is practised, on this occasion, in popish countries, viz. the numbers of priests assisting at the procession all clothed in white; the monstrous size of the shrine, upon which the host or wafer is supported, carried upon the shoulders of priests, the numbers of young women dressed in white, and marching at the head of the procession, the numbers of little boys dressed likewise in white, decked with flowers and armed with wings; the little lambs also led in the procession; the streets strewn with flowers; the houses on each side hung with the richest tapestry; the little chapels and altars provided at certain stations; the bands of music, and the several rounds and stations they perform before they

return home, — let such a man I say, compare all this with what the pagan writers tell us, of *their* processions, and he will find the one to be an exact copy of the other.

I shall omit the words of Virgil and Ovid who tell us of the host of the goddess Ceres, being carried in procession thrice round the corn-fields by priests and others, all dressed in white and attended with lighted flambeaux, &c. and shall content myself with what Apuleius says\* in his description of the ceremony usually practised on the festival of the goddess Diana.

First he describes those who performed the prelude of the ceremony. "One," says he, "was girded about with a belt and marched along with a military gait. Another with a cap and lance looked like a sportsman. Another was disguised in the habit of a damsel with his frizette, and silks and gilt clogs. One carried a sword and buckler as if he was just come out of a fencing school. Another looked like a magistrate with his *fascēs* and purple. And another with his cloak and long beard, and pantoufles and staff looked like an old philosopher. There I saw," says he, "a tame she bear dressed up like a girl and carried in a chair; an ape dressed with a hat and yellow robe, &c. These were followed by the procession, where the women, all dressed in white, marched first and strewed the ground with flowers. Then a great number of people with flambeaux, wax-candles and torches. Afterwards a band of music. Then a set of singing boys dressed in white and repeating hymns in praise of the goddess; next to them were the superiors and chief priests, who with their heads shaved, and dressed in white, carried the sacred relics of the gods. Those who came up next were likewise dressed in white and carried

\* Metam. l. 11. pag. 200. edit. plantin, 1587.



the altars. One carried the chest wherein the sacred mysteries of religion were locked up. Another carried the venerable effigy of the divinity; and then appeared the gods who condescend to walk upon human feet."

Polydore Virgil tells us\* that every street thro' which the procession passed, was hung with tapestry as is practised still among the christians; the same author tells us, that, in Italy, boys and girls are forbidden to look from their windows at the procession. This rule was first made by the pagans for which Verrius Flaccus gives the following reason. "When the plague raged at Rome the oracles declared it was because the people looked down upon the gods when they were carried in procession through the streets." This put the whole city in a consternation not understanding what the oracle meant, as the latin word *despicio* was equivocal and signified to despise as well as to look down upon. At last it happened that, on Diana's procession-day a little child looked down from an upper story, and repeated to his mother the order that the mysteries, which were carried in an open chariot, were disposed in. As soon as the senate was informed of it they ordered that all the places, through which the procession was to pass, should be veiled with tapestry. The ambiguity of the oracle being thus cleared up, the plague immediately ceased, and the people were convinced that the sacred ceremonies were profaned by looking down upon the gods as they were carried in procession, "It is from thence," says Polydore Virgil, "that the custom was borrowed of forbidding boys and girls to look from their windows at the procession."

Nothing can be more ludicrous than the theatrical disguises that are acted at processions in Spain

\* Lib. 6, c. 11.

and Italy. Like the old Satyrs and Fauns,\* that danced and capered at the bacchanals or processions of Bacchus, they go in masquerade and dance with lascivious postures to the music of fiddles, &c. They carry dogs and cats wrapped up in swaddling clothes from whose cries, joined to the music of instruments, results a most droll kind of symphony. Polydore Virgil, cited as before, speaks of these processions thus: "The old Romans and many other nations had many superstitious processions; and it is from them, without doubt, that we have borrowed the custom. For at our processions the ceremony is opened by pageant streamers, by a party of cavaliers and lansquenets marching out in rank and file, or by some antic personages who raise terror and laughter at once. These are followed by several other scenical personages. The prophets make a part of the ceremony. One personates David, another represents Solomon, others, are arrayed in the disguise of queens. The singing boys armed with wings make up a part of the choir —."

All the processions of the church of Rome, as well those that are made on certain days of the year, viz. Corpus Christi, the Purification, Palm-Sunday, Rogation-Week, &c. as those that are made upon extraordinary occasions, as in time of pestilence, famine, war, &c. are so many imitations of paganism. There was nothing more common among the heathens than the processions they called supplications or rogations. On those occasions they carried the images and relics of their gods with great pomp and solemnity. *Vehuntur in pompa Simulachra deorum* says Macrobius. "Our priests" says Polydore Virgil,\* "act in like manner.

\* *Satur*, in Hebrew, signifies covered or disguised; and *phanim* signifies faces, i. e. visards and masks. Hence, such as wear visards and masks are called *Satyrs* and *Fauns* or *Pans*.

† Lib. 6, c. 11.

We observe all these things ; but I doubt whether what we do be as laudable as it is pompous. I am afraid, I say I am afraid that by so doing we honour the heathen gods more than we do Jesus Christ. For those gods require to be served with pomp and magnificence as Sallust says ; but Jesus Christ hates nothing more than such ostentation as he shews by saying : “when thou prayest enter into the closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy father,” &c. What will become of us if we do contrary to his orders ? At least, let what will happen us, it is certain we do not obey him.”

As to the order of the parade in the ancient and modern processions it is exactly the same as may be seen in the description Counsellor du Choul gives us of one of the emperor Domitian’s medals. “I remember says he,\* to have seen one of those medals, on the reverse side of which was represented a procession of the old Romans wherein the young choiristers or singing boys marched first ; then the priests vested in surplices, with the crown of their heads shaved, and carrying branches of laurels in their hands, afterwards the emperors in their purple robes &c.”

The motives of the extraordinary processions of the church of Rome, are, as I observed before, some public calamity or other. Now to testify their devotion on these occasions they go barefooted, as the old heathens did, and sometimes wear ropes about their necks as is recorded of cardinal Borromues and several others. “This is a sensible proof of your blindness and stupidity, says Tertullian to the heathens† that, in the sultry heats of the summer, when the fruits of the earth are in danger of perishing for want of moisture, you call for rain to Jupiter by various kinds of sacrifices and superstitions. You order the people

\* pag. 250.

† Apolog. C. 40.



to perform the processions bare-footed. You seek at the capitol for what is to be found only in heaven. You expect that the ceilings of your temples shall be changed into clouds and come down upon you in refreshing showers."

In the church of Rome it is customary to make processions round the fields in order to bless the fruits of the earth, and thereby prevent the fatal effects of blasts, &c. This very thing was practised every year among the heathens, and was called *lustrare agros* i. e. exorcising the fields with holy water, as appears by the following verses :\*

*Fruges lustramus & agros,  
ritus ut a prisco traditus extat ævo.*

Virgil has the same thing in his fifth eclogue where he says : *Cum solemnia vota reddemus nymphis & cum lustrabimus agros*. The twenty-fifth of April was kept holy among the old Romans, and was called *Rubigalia* i. e. 'the feast of blasts and mildews,' because the gods were solicited by sacrifices and prayers on that day, to avert those accidents from the fruits of the earth. The same day, which is the feast of St. Mark, is celebrated in like manner and for the same purpose, in the church of Rome ; as also the three days immediately preceding the Ascension, which are called 'the days of rogation', or, as the old heathens called them, 'supplication.'

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**FEASTS OF THE SAINTS—JUBILEES,  
ALL SOULS DAY—CROSS DAYS—BONFIRES, &c. &c.**

I have already observed that the corruptions which crept into the christian religion were, in a great measure, owing to emulation. As the pri-

\* Tibull. l. 2. Eleg. 1.

mitive christians would not assist at the heathen feasts, and, otherwise, had no public festivities of their own, they were looked upon as a dark, designing, dangerous set of people, enemies to the gods, to the established religion and laws, and the public peace and prosperity. Their religion was considered in the light of superstition and novelty and all the public disasters and miscarriages were charged to their account. At last it seemed expedient to celebrate the heathen feasts, but to give the festivity a new turn by substituting christian saints instead of the heathen gods or saints and saintesses. Thus all the heathen feasts were adopted into the christian religion, partly to soften and gain the heathens, and partly to gratify the predominant passion of human nature for pomp and pageantry. And thus the old heathen feasts of *februa*, *vinalia*, *rubigalia*, *ambarvalia*, &c. were introduced among christians under the new forms and names of 'purification or caudlemas,' St. Martin's feasts, processions about corn-fields, 'rogations' 'litanies,' &c. This the Romanists themselves confess as will appear in the sequel of this article.

Polydore Virgil complains in the following words, of the multiplicity and licentiousness of those feasts.\* "Those days of rest are employed by a great part of the world, not at prayer, nor to hear the word of God, but, in debauchery and riot, as if they had adopted Plato's notions, who said the feasts were instituted only for this purpose. And thus we nobly imitate the heathens in this as well as several other things, which our ancestors were so far from doing that they reproached the heathens with it. Witness Tertullian who, speaking of the feasts dedicated to the Cesars, says, "the christians will therefore be deemed public enemies, because the honours they pay to the emperors

\* L. 6, c. 8,

are neither vain, nor flattering, nor foolish." Can people think that it is a sign of devotion and piety to make bon-fires, to dance along the streets, to spread out tables and make feasts in public, to turn the city into one great tipling-house, and to run up and down to commit outrages and gratify luxury?" The reflection that Polydore Virgil makes upon these words of Tertullian is very remarkable, "When Tertullian wrote these things" says he, "he did not suspect that the day would come, when all those abuses could be charged upon the christians. And notwithstanding, the time is come when it may be justly said, that we rather solemnize the feasts of the Cæsars than the Christians."

The second of February is called "the purification or candlemas," and is celebrated in honour of the Virgin Mary, by the people going in procession round the churches with wax-candles in their hands. Those candles, which must always be blest by a priest at mass, are thought to have the virtue of chasing away fairies and all other evil spirits and illusions. Now this is the very feast that was celebrated by the ancient Romans in honour of the goddess Proserpine. The whole city marched in procession on the first day of February, and the women performed rounds about the temples by night with torches or flambeaux in their hands, which was the reason the christians had for performing the solemnity on the following day, as every feast must have a Virgil or wake.

Rhenanus, in his notes on Tertullian's fifth book against Marcion, has the following words: "It cannot be denied that the custom, which prevails at present among Christians, of carrying lighted tapers on the day that is dedicated to the purification of the Virgin Mary, took its first rise from the feast celebrated by the ancient Romans on the



first of February. By this slight alteration, the obstinate pagans were kept in countenance, whereas they would have been highly provoked had the ceremony been entirely suppressed."

The chronicle of saints owns the same thing, and accounts for it more at large. These are the words: "Why has the church ordered people to carry lighted candles on this day? To abolish an erroneous custom. For, in ancient times, the whole city of Rome was thronged on the calends of February with people who marched in procession, carrying tapers and lighted wisps in their hands, in honour of Februa the mother of Mars the god of battle. The Romans likewise offered sacrifices in February to Febru or Pluto the god of hell, and did it for the souls of their ancestors to placate this god and incline him to be merciful to them. Again they offered sacrifices to them all together, and walked about all night with torches and tapers. The Roman ladies, according to pope Innocent, celebrated the feast of candles or Candlemas on that very day in honour of Proserpine, who as the poets told, was so beautiful, that Pluto fell in love with her, and carried her off to make her a goddess.

Her parents, not knowing what became of her, traversed woods and forests for a long time in quest of her with lighted tapers and torches. And this was commemorated by the Roman ladies in their several tours and processions about the city with lights in their hands. As it is no easy matter to reform old customs, the new converts were so tenacious of this pagan custom, that pope Sergius the first, was obliged to change it into a better, by ordering processions about the churches with lighted tapers in honour of the mother of God. And thus the solemnity was continued but with a different intention."

It is thought by a great many that this feast was originally called the Purification of the Virgin Mary, in the temple thirty days after she was delivered of our Saviour. But they are all mistaken, for it was so called for near, and perhaps more than two thousand years before. The old Romans borrowed this feast from the Egyptians, but gave it a different interpretation. The colony of Cham were not long settled in Egypt when they found they had no occasion for dung or any kind of manure whatsoever, the land being already sufficiently fertilized by the sludge and slime the inundation of the Nile left behind it every year. Accordingly, as every particular work in that country, was announced by public indictions, and begun at the same time throughout the state; it was ordered, that all the rotten straw, mouldy corn, dung, &c. should be gathered and set on fire the first of February, which was the finest month they had in the year. This day, called 'the lighted wisps and fires' or 'the feast of the purification of the air' was proclaimed by an Isis and a Horus. The Isis was called *obs* or *ops* mouldiness or rottenness, from the Hebrew verb *baash*, which signifies to be rotten or mouldy. The Horus was called *our* or *ourim* the fire or firebrands, from whence that season of the year has been ever since called *ouer*, or *wer*, or *ver* 'the Spring.'

There was another feast celebrated in this month by the heathens, which the church of Rome has adopted but translated to the second day of November, and was called 'all souls-day' such was the devotion of the heathens on this day, by offering sacrifices for the souls in purgatory, by praying at the graves, and performing processions round the church-yards with lighted tapers, that they called this month 'the month of pardons, indulgences, and

absolutions for the souls in purgatory, or, as Plutarch calls it, 'the purifying month or season for the feast of purification,' because the living and the dead were supposed to be purged and purified on these occasions from their sins by sacrifices, flagellations, and other works of mortification and religion. Polydore Virgil speaks of this custom\* in these words: 'The custom of praying for the dead,' says he, 'is of ancient date. Cicero shows it in his first harangue against Anthony, where he says: let funeral honours and supplications be made for him whose grave is not known. Thus they performed an anniversary service, that is, they offered sacrifices every year in honour of the dead, &c. It is believed, says he, that Eneas was the first author of this ceremony, and that he paid this honour to his father Anchises, as Virgil describes it in the fifth book of his *Enied*. Thus we observe the same ceremony for the salvation of the dead.'

Suetonius in his life of Cæsar Augustus says, that, that emperor being once in the Isle of Capris or Caprea† saw, from his apartment, a great number of people with flambeaux, about the grave of one who had died a twelve-month before. This is taken notice of by Cardinal Baronius and acknowledged to be the same with the anniversary service for the dead, as performed in the church of Rome.

It was a received opinion among the heathens, that the souls of the dead appeared to the living to call for their sacrifices, their offerings, and prayers. Thus Ovid says‡ that, when the service for the dead was interrupted by the public troubles, the dead appeared frequently from their graves by night and were heard howling and complaining that they were neglected.

\* lib. 6. C. 9. † An Island at the entrance of the gulph of Naples.

‡ Fast. l. 2.



—*Bustis exisſe parentes*  
*Et tacitæ quæſtos tempore noctis avos :*  
*Perque vias urbis latosque ululaſſe per agros*  
*Deformes animas.*

The ſame author tells us, that the bloody ghos-  
 of Remus appeared to Romulus in bed, begging of  
 him to get an anniversary performed for him.\*  
 Suetonius tells us in his life of Caligula, that, that  
 emperor's body having been buried privately in a  
 garden, the gardeners were terrified by ghos-  
 ts that appeared to them every night; and that the house,  
 he was aſſaſſinated in, was conſtantly haunted by  
 frightful viſions until it was burnt. The dialogues  
 of pope Gregory the firſt, are full of the like ſto-  
 ries, of ſouls appearing from purgatory and requir-  
 ing to have maſſes ſaid for them.

Not only obits and anniversaries but alſo month's-  
 minds, and ſeven day's-minds, and three days, and  
 quotidian or daily maſſes, are celebrated in the  
 church of Rome for ſouls in purgatory. All this  
 has been borrowed from the heathens. "The pa-  
 gans, ſays Flavius Blondus whom I have already  
 quoted, believing that the dead were relieved by  
 the ſacrifices and ſuffrages of the living, offered  
 ſacrifices for them in nine day's time after the  
 funeral honours; and this ſervice they called *sacrum*  
*novendiale* or the nine day's mind. We do the ſame  
 thing, ſays he, by celebrating the divine office, for  
 the ſouls departed, either the ſeventh day or at  
 the end of the twelve months." Polydore Virgil  
 ſays; "It is from the heathen *sacrum novendiale*  
 that we took the cuſtom of performing ſervice for  
 the dead the ſeventh day after the funeral ceremony."

The Greeks and Romans celebrated a feaſt, in  
 the month of November, in honour of Bacchus  
 whom they ſometimes represented ſtriding upon a

hogshead and quaffing wine gloriously like a god. This feast was called by the Greeks, Pithægia, and by the Romans, Vinalia, because it was on that day they broached their wines. The church of Rome has substituted another god\* in his place whose feast is celebrated with such drinking and carousing that it was called the Bacchanal of the christians, and has given occasion to a deal of burlesque. Thus Thomas Næagorgus, a christian poet, characterizes this feast :

*Altera Martinus nobis Bachanalia præbet,  
Quæ colit anseribus populus multoque Lyæo.*

The ancient Egyptians, as Herodotus tells us, had a feast which they celebrated every year with lighted flambeaux about their houses the whole night. This solemnity which was called the feast of the flambeaux, is observed among us still, says Cardinal Baronius, † having been translated to the feast of the ascension.

It was customary among the heathens, to adorn their temples and houses with green boughs and flowers, a thing that was abhorred by the primitive

\* This Martin I call a god, because the Romanists affect to call their saints by that name, as also because I have already proved, that their saints are all deified men, &c. in the very sense of the old heathens. I have a large latin treatise of saints in my hands, where the word *sanctus* is not once to be found, but the word *divus*, more than once in every page throughout the whole work. It is not to be doubted that many drunkards and other infamous persons, have been canonized or deified, and proposed as objects of adoration, when they ought to be held in execration. Before the ceremony of canonization was instituted, people were canonized only by the voice of the public, and then the canonization must have been as capricious as the humours of the multitude. I have already cited a canon whereby the pope reserves to himself the right of canonizing any person whatsoever. The immediate occasion of that canon was because the populace of Rome, by virtue of their old charter, declared and honoured, as a saint, one that had died in a drunken fit. They gathered up his clay and other relics, and applied them by eating and otherwise for the purpose of miracles and cures. This practice was so superstitious, so ridiculous and scandalous, and, at the same time, such a bold encroachment upon the pope's supreme prerogative, that he levelled their saint as low as hell by that canon from the Vatican.



christians, says Tertullian, for this reason chiefly, because it was a heathen custom. I should not have mentioned this point of conformity but for the remark that Cardinal Baronius makes upon it, which is : " that there being many who could not be brought off from this practice, it seems it has been very prudently introduced into the worship of the true religion." This confirms a remark that I have already made viz. that the heathen converts were so much attached to their old customs, that it is natural to think they introduced them into the church as soon as they met with the least countenance for it. Those being joined to other popular prejudices became in time such a torrent as could not well be withstood. At last the indolence, self-interestedness and corruption of the times, thought it safer and better to endeavour to palliate and sanctify, than to oppose them.

There are certain times and seasons, that christians are apt to count inauspicious and unlucky, certain days that are called the cross-days of the year ; for instance, whatever day of the week the feast of the holy innocents falls upon, is accounted so ominous and fatal, that people take care never to begin any work on that day throughout the year. This superstitious notion has been, like the rest, borrowed from the heathens. To omit the ridiculous consequences they drew from such and such aspects and configurations of the planets, &c. I shall only take notice of the reason they had for not celebrating a nuptial ceremony in the month of May. They believed that, at that season of the year, all places were invested by evil spirits who wandered about every night ; to appease which they offered sacrifices, shut up their temples, &c. as may be seen in these words of Ovid\* :

\* Fast. l. 5.



*Nec viduæ tædis eadem nec virginis apta  
 Tempora ; quæ nupsit non diuturna fuit.  
 Hac quoque de Causa, si te proverbia tangunt,  
 Mense malas maio nubere vulgus ait.*

It is likewise customary with people to plant green poles or branches before their doors on the first of this month. This silly superstitious practice has been, as Polydore Vrigil says, borrowed from the old Romans, who always celebrated that day in honour of the goddess Flora. The Romans borrowed it from the old Egyptians, who celebrated the feast in a different month and upon different principles. In Egypt the month of February is the most gay and delightful season in the year. The whole country is from one to the other, a large carpet enamelled with flowers. It was in this month that the Egyptians held their assizes ; to proclaim which they set up a symbol that bore a visible analogy with the intent of the indiction and, among many other names called it Soterim or Soterin (from whence came the word saturn) which signifies assizes, judgments, judges, &c. In imitation of this custom, justice was formerly administred in Europe in the finest of our months, viz. in May ; and the same was proclaimed by a public sign or symbol suitable to the occasion and the season of the year. But when the current writing was introduced, and the assizes held in other months as well as May, this symbol became useless. However, as it appeared still to bear some relation to the administration of justice, the custom was kept up by planting a green arbour, or the like, before the houses of manor-lords and magistrates. At last it degenerated into the form we have it in at present. This is the true origin of that feast, and not what a certain romancer says viz. that a saint being once persecuted, fled for refuge into a house that held out a bush at the

door ; to which his pursuers thought to steer by the direction of the token, but found themselves all on a sudden bewildered in a labyrinth of bushes. Surely then every christian ought for ever after to hang out a bush at his door to perpetuate the memory of so extraordinary a miracle ! Macrobius, in the first book of his *Saturnalia*, tells us, that the *Flamines* were ordered by *Numa Pompilius* to send out a crier on the eves of feast-days, to denounce to the people in the name of the high-priest that such or such days should be kept holy. The same thing is continued in the church of Rome, where the people are advertised by the ringing of a little bell, that the following day is to be kept holy, and that pardons and indulgences are to be distributed in such and such a church.

The old Romans had a feast which was held but once in every hundred years and was celebrated with greater solemnity than any other, viz. the *ludi sæculares* or secular games. On this occasion \* heralds were dispatched throughout all Italy, to invite the people to assist at what they had never before seen nor never should see again. People flocked to Rome from all parts of the world, not only to see the exhibitions in the amphitheatre, &c. but also for devotion's sake. † They went in procession day and night to the temples. They offered unnumbered victims in the *Campus Martius* to the gods. They offered them the first fruits, they made public rogations and prayers, and sung hymns and anthems to implore their protection. This solemnity, like the rest has been adopted by the church of Rome. It is called the grand Jubilee, Pope Boniface the eighth, who first established it in the church, invited all Christendom to it; and in order to induce the people to go to Rome, pro-

\* Herodianus l. 3. in vita severi cent. 1. c. 58.

† Angel. Politianus in miscell.



granted a plenary absolution and remission of sins, both as to guilt and punishment, to all such as should visit the churches of Peter and Paul.

Such was the ambition of the heathen emperors that they often changed the order and time of celebrating those games. Such as could not expect to live to the end of the century, abridged the time. Augustus Cæsar was the first to make the change, Claudius Cæsar brought them on in sixty-three years after; for which reason the public, as Suetonius tells us, laughed at the crier when he said: "Come and see the games that you never saw before, and that you will never see again." for there were people still living who had seen those in Augustus's time. The popes, in like manner, have been impatient to see the jubilee celebrated. Accordingly Clement the sixth, finding what immense wealth he could amass by such an occasion, ordered it should be celebrated every fiftieth year in imitation as he pretended of the jubilee of the Jews. Urban the sixth, thought that time too long; so he reduced it to three and thirty years. Boniface the ninth, was most impatient of all, for he brought it on in nine years after Urban. At last Sixtus the fourth, in order to obviate the inconveniency of such variations, issued a bull whereby the time was limited to every five and twentieth year.

Some people pretend that this Roman jubilee was instituted in imitation of that of the Jews. But this is a gross mistake, for there is no affinity between them. Boniface the eighth, who instituted it, had no such thought in his head; for he ordained that it should be celebrated by his successors only every hundredth year in imitation of the secular games. Is there any such thing practised now in time of jubilee as was formerly among the Jews? Are bond-men set at liberty? Are prisons opened? Are all debtors discharged? Are proprietors



restored to their former possessions? Is the land left untilld for a whole year, and is what it produces spontaneously left in common to all? This jubilee therefore took its rise from the heathens, as Polydore Virgil acknowledges. "It is very probable" says he "that this jubilee was instituted by Boniface the eighth, in order to divert the attention of the public, especially the people of Rome, from the empty pomp of the secular games; and that he changed his pagan ceremony into a better."

From what has been hitherto alleged, it is sufficiently plain, that those feasts whereby the nerves of morality as well as industry, are, to the great shame and scandal of religion, unbraced, have been all instituted by the heathens. But, still this may be said in favour of the ancient and modern Romans, that they are less superstitious upon those occasions than the old Jews, who thought it a crime to do any manner of work on the sabbath-day; even to kindle a fire, or dress their victuals, or rise out of a ditch if they should chance to fall into it on that day, as we are told of a rabbi called Solomon, who, having tumbled into a privy on his sabbath, would not suffer himself to be dragged out of it, saying: *Sabbata sancta colo de stercore surgere nolo*; to which the christians answered: *Sabbata nostra quidem Solomon Celebrabis ibidem*

The heathens were more reasonable. They, indeed, abstained from their ordinary occupations; but, still they made no scruple of doing the works of necessity, such as watering their cattle, and the like, as may be seen in the following words:

*Quippe etiam testis quaedam exercere diebus*

*Fas & Jura simunt; rivos deducere milla*

*Religio vetuit, segeti praetendere sepem*

*Insidias avibus moliri, incenbere Vepres,*

*Balantumgue gregem fluvio mersare salubri,*

The Roman casuists are not more scrupulous.\* They allow the poor, in case of necessity, to work in private on feast-days. They extend the same indulgence to surgeons, apothecaries, notaries, &c. Nay, they allow to work publicly in harvest-time. But exclusive of a case of necessity, the one and the other think it a deadly sin to work on festivals, and pretend that their gods have been always revenged of such as profaned the days that were consecrated to them. The Pagans would not suffer their women to spin on a holy day. *Non audeat ulla lanificam pensis imposuisse manum* says Tibullus. And Ovid says that Bacchus punished Alcithoe and her sisters for spinning on this day.

The popish histories are larded with the like accounts of miraculous punishments inflicted by their gods or saints, upon the profaners of their festivals. We are told that a woman going to work on the virgin's day, and, stepping aside to answer a call, was whirled about by a sudden hurricane and tumbled into her own odure, whereby her face was wofully besmeared. A man putting on a shirt, that had been washed on the virgin's day, found it all stained with blood; for which reason, it was laid up in a shrine along with other holy relics. A poor man going on St. Francis's day, to cut some firing, heard a voice saying thrice: "This is my feast, it is not lawful to work to day." But the man, persisting in his design, found his hands glued to the handle of his hatchet; this made him beg pardon, and promise never to be guilty of the same any more, whereupon the good saint forgave him, and restored the use of his hands. Another had his oxen and waggon and his own thigh burnt by fire from heaven, for only greasing his wheels on Mary Magdalen's day. These and a thousand other legendary stories are to be found in lives of saints.

\* Tolet. inst. sacre d. l. 4. C. 25.

I shall close this article with a few strictures on the Carnaval, a scandalous festivity that is practised in popish countries, for whole weeks together, by way of preparation for the fast of lent, whoever saw the disorders and excesses, that are committed on this occasion, must own the carnaval to be an entire revival of all the riot and extravagance of the Saturnalia, the Bacchanalia and the Lupercalia of the old heathens. Seneca, in his eighteenth epistle, gives us the following account of the saturnalia. "We are now come to the eighteenth of December," says he to his friend Lucilius, a time when the whole city is dissolved in excess. Luxury knows no bounds. Every one exerts himself to the utmost of his ability. There are such preparations making, that one would think the Saturnalia cannot be a working day. If you were here I would willingly ask you what we should do; whether we should not live as usual, or, to avoid singularity, whether we should not throw off our gravity and indulge ourselves like others; for all our diversions at present are carried on in masquerade. It would certainly be more becoming in us, to remain dry and hungry at this time, when people are tunnning wine into their bodies and disgorging it again into the streets. But complaisance obliges people to affect no singularity, but to do as others do, provided it be done in another manner; for people may indulge themselves without running into excess." Herodianus says: "It is allowed, upon those occasions, to wear masks and visards, to act the buffoon or fool, to assume the disguise of a man or a woman, or, as Lipsius says, of savages and wild beasts: for, those days, says another author, were devoted to all infamous practices." "It is said, notwithstanding, that those who riot thus at the carnaval, are, comparatively speaking, but few in number, and that such abuses ought not to be charged upon the whole church. But



this very plea was made by the old heathens. Cicero, in his second Philippick, makes those masquerades a part of his charge against Mark Anthony. And Varro, as St. Austin testifies, says that "those who assist at the bacchanals must be all out of their senses." There was not a wise or good man amongst them that did not disavow and condemn those festivities. Now as the fathers of the primitive church have, notwithstanding, frequently upbraided and charged the whole body of the heathens with those abuses, with how much more justice, is the whole body or the church of Rome to be charged with the abuses of the carnival, considering what pains some of the ablest of their divines, for instance cardinal Cajetan, have taken to justify and excuse them. Here we see the unhappy effects of school-sophistry and religious faction! Here we see how the heathen customs became so many christian ceremonies! Such is the stupendous virtue of a school-distinction, that it can sanctify even the horrid murders and barbarities of the inquisition itself.

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### CONSECRATION OF CHURCHES, &c.

The relation which rational creatures bear to God as the author of their being, their preserver, their benefactor, and supreme Lord, necessarily implies an obligation of acknowledging the same by love, respect, obedience and such other testimonies of gratitude. For, as it is the voice of nature, and, consequently, the voice of God himself, that every kindness contracts a debt, it follows that man at the first moment of his existence contracted an obligation of thanking his maker, which thankfulness or gratitude, in effect, is nothing but religion. Therefore man was by nature designed for, and indispensibly tied down to the duties of devo-

tion and religion. Now as God might, if he pleased, have peopled the whole earth, as he did the heavens, without any distinction of sexes, so he might have instructed every man by himself without the instrumental assistance of any other. But as he ordered the species to be propagated by mutual assistance, he likewise ordered the knowledge and practice of religion to be communicated and established by mutual edification and instruction. Hence the necessity of external worship and the obligation of performing religious duties in a public manner. Accordingly we find that, since the beginning of the world, people have assembled together from time to time, in order, by sacrifice and other acts of religion, to testify their subjection to, and dependence upon, their creator; and to enter into solemn engagements to be faithful to him and to each other. At first every father of a family was priest in his own family. But, when families began to multiply and to incorporate into societies, the chief rulers of such incorporations, like so many fathers of families, offered sacrifice and performed the other duties of religion. Hence it is that, in former days, captains and generals of armies, and even kings themselves, have frequently offered sacrifice. So thoroughly convinced were mankind, from the beginning, of the obligation they contracted, by nature, of assembling together and instructing each other in the duties of religion.

Mankind for a long time, even after the flood, had no other tabernacle or temple for religious purposes, than the vaulted firmament of heaven. The inclemency of the seasons directed them to assemble together in woods and groves and other retreats of shelter. At last they took the hint to build themselves temples. But, as the best of things may be abused, it was so with the institution of religious edifices, though in itself useful, pious and laudable.

As God is to be adored in spirit and truth, and as he is equally present every where, and is therefore, as much honoured on the top of a mountain as in the bottom of valley; as much in an open plain as in a shady grove or the most magnificent building; the original motive for building such edifices was the conveniency of the people, viz. that they might know where to assemble and be sheltered from the weather. But, in process of time, it happened with those buildings as with religion itself, the whole was defaced and transformed into pomp and pageantry, and the veneration for those buildings carried to a most superstitious excess.

Before the erecting any of those edifices, the Aruspices chose the place and fixed the time for beginning the work. They began when the air was serene and the sky unclouded. On the limits of the building were placed fillets and garlands; and soldiers, whose names were thought auspicious, entered the enclosure with boughs in their hands. Then came the vestal virgins or nuns and sprinkled the ground with holy water. Next followed a solemn sacrifice and prayers to the gods to prosper the building they were going to erect for their habitation. This done, the priest touched the stone, which was to be first laid, and bound it with a fillet. After which the magistrates and persons of the first rank assisted by the people, fixed it for a foundation, throwing in with it small gold coins and other pieces of money. When these buildings were finished they were consecrated with abundance of ceremony. And so great was the veneration felt for the temples by the people, that they frequently as a mark of humiliation, clambered up to them on their knees (for they always had an ascent of steps) and, before they went in, expiated their sins by sprinkling themselves with holy water,



which was always to be had in the porch or entrance of the temple.\* So holy was the place, that it was thought criminal for a man even to spit or blow his nose there. So great was their devotion in those temples, that the women used to prostrate themselves on the ground and sweep the pavement with their hair. They became sanctuaries for debtors and criminals, and on all holy days were constantly decked with flowers and green branches.

The degeneracy of those buildings from their primitive simplicity and design, the folly of consecrating them to particular gods or goddesses, and the vanity and superstition of their decorations and magnificence, cannot be better painted than by repeating the answers and remonstrances of the fathers of the three first centuries upon this subject. Thus Arnobius in his expostulation with the heathens.† “You make it a heinous crime in us, says he, that we build no temples, that we set up no images there, that we raise no altars, that we offer no sacrifice, that we burn no incense, and that we make no offering of bread and wine. Our omitting these things, says he, does not proceed from impiety nor from any contempt of the divinity, but because we think that the gods, if they really be such, must laugh at such honours or suffer them with indignation if they be susceptible of any such passion. We ask you, says he, what service can those temples be of to the gods? For what purpose were they built formerly, or why ought they be built at all? Do the gods feel the severe colds of the winter-season, or do they suffer by the scorching heat of the summer? Are they afraid of winds or rains? Are they in such dread of being insulted by plunderers, or torn in pieces

\* Theodoret. l. 3. C. 15. du Choul, pag. 226. † Lib. 6. Contra gentes.

by wild beasts, as may make it necessary to secure them within walls and fortresses. In the main what are those temples? Indeed, considering what little man can do, we may allow them to be something great and magnificent: but by judging of them in contrast with the grandeur and majesty of the gods, they are no more than little nooks or rather narrow little caves planned out by weak brains. Suppose those temples were composed of the richest marble and built with exquisite art; suppose the ceilings were all fretted with gold, and hung with the most precious stones; suppose the number and order of them were so various and so regular, as in some measure to represent the beauty of the firmament, yet, after all they are but clay, and the very dross of the earth. And though their grandeur and magnificence attract the eyes and admiration of men, yet that is no reason that gods should find pleasure in them, or like that they should be employed as prisons to immure and confine them in. Here, you say, is the temple of Mars, there is the temple of Juno. Apollo lives here; Hercules dwells there, &c. What! is it not offering an insult to the gods to distinguish them by the places of their abode? To lodge them, to make niches and cells for them, and to think they stand in need of accommodations like men, cats, pismires, lizards," &c. Lactantius has the following words: \* "The glittering of gold, ivory, precious stones, &c. dazzles the eyes of the world, who think that religion cannot subsist without them. People approach to the gods not so much for devotion's sake as to gratify their curiosity. So that the worship of the gods is nothing else than what curiosity admires." And again he says: † "There was but one God adored in the

world when those gods, whom you worship with impiety, were yet unborn. Tis true God hates evil and loves good. It is not stones and mortar that are his temple, but man himself who bears his resemblance And this temple ought to be adorned, not with gold or the corruptible gifts of precious stones, but with the incorruptible presents of all kinds of virtuous actions." And in another place speaking of the expense the heathens put themselves to in decking their images, he says: "They clothe with veils and precious habits, things that need no covering. They offer them presents of gold and silver, which are as much lost to the givers as to the receivers."

Cardinal Baronius, in his martyrology, tells us, that the primitive christians had such horror for the heathen temples that, until the time of Gregory the first, they either demolished them or left them waste. But in this pope's time\* and from thenceforth the church made use of them, and assimilated all the pageantry and superstitious ceremony of the heathens, as may be seen by comparing of the Roman pontifical, &c. with the old pagan ritual.

I have already given an abstract of the ceremonial practised by the heathens in the consecration

\* We have under the article of saints and angels, seen this pope's orders to Austin the monk at Canterbury, forbidding to destroy the heathen temples. We find that he has also forbidden the breaking or tearing down images in churches or temples. For in his letter to the Bishop of Marseilles, he has the following words as inserted in the canon-law: "Perlatum ad nos fuerat quod, inconsiderato zelo succensus, sanctorum imagines, sub hac quasi excusatione ne adorari debuissent, confregeris. Et quidem quia eas adorari vetuisses omnino laudavimus: fregisse vero reprehendimus. Dic frater a quo factum sacerdote aliquando auditum est quod fecisti? Si non aliud vel illud te non debuit revocare, ne despectis aliis fratribus solum te sanctum esse crederes & Sapientem? aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturæ historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere. Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis præstat pictura cernentibus; in ipsa etiam ignorantes vident quid sequi debant; in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt. Unde & præcipue Gentibus pro lectione pictura est." Can. 27. dist. 3. de Consecratione.



of their temples or mass houses\*. The ceremonies used by the church of Rome are much the same. For the bishop first sprinkles the place, where a church is to be erected, with holy water. Then instead of fillets and garlands, he places twelve crosses on the limits of the place, and puts a lighted taper before each cross. He blesses the first stone and places it himself in the foundation. Next follows the consecration with oil, and at last the sacrifice of the mass as the soul of the whole ceremony.†

The pagans often undertook long journeys by way of pilgrimage to visit the most celebrated temples of their gods, thinking that the prayers and sacrifices they should offer there, would be more available than what they could do in their own temples at home. Thus, as we gather from St. Luke,‡ people came from all parts of Asia and Europe to visit the temples of Diana at Ephesus. All other famous temples were visited in like manner. Cicero says of the people that flocked into Sicily to visit the temple of Ceres, that they seemed rather going to visit Ceres herself, than her temple. So lavish was the devotion of people in those times, that the riches of the temple of Apollo at Delphos, for instance, arising from offerings and votive presents, are computed to to have been tantamount to a million of money. All this is practised in the church of Rome. The famous church of Loretto in Italy is alone a sufficient demonstration of it. This church is reckoned the richest in the world, and famous for the *santa casa* or holy house where the blessed virgin was born, saluted by the angel, and brought up her

\* That the heathen temples were so many mass-houses is evident from what I have said on the derivation of the word mass, from whence the whole ceremony is to this day called *missio*, *missa*, or the mass. Accordingly the Irish have no term in their language for a church but the word *templum* or temple assimilated.

† Can. 3. dist. 1. de consecrat.

‡ Act. 19. 27.

son till he was twelve years of age. The Romanists pretend that this house was carried through the air by angels from Galilee to Tersato in Dalmatia, on the east side of the Adriatic sea, in the year 1291; and, in three years and a half afterwards, transported over the gulph of Venice into Italy; and after two or three short removals, was at length fixed in its present situation at Loretto. In it is an image of the blessed virgin placed in a niche with her infant on her right arm and a tripple crown on her head. The whole statue is covered with diamonds and pearls, and round it a sort of rainbow of precious stones of divers colours. All the altars, utensils, and ornaments in the place are immensely rich. The sacristy or treasury is filled with jewels, gold, vessels and ornaments more precious than gold itself, the votive presents of emperors, kings, queens, popes and other persons of both sexes for these many hundred years past; works in silver are not thought worthy to be admitted here. The whole is computed to be worth nine millions of rix-dollars. To this holy house five hundred thousand pilgrims have often resorted in one year between easter and whitsuntide; and during two days in September, at the festival of the virgin's nativity, no less than two hundred thousand have visited Loretto. This prodigious concourse of people was, indeed, before the reformation; but the usual number now is between forty and fifty thousand. And, as none of these come empty handed, but contribute something to augment the treasure of the holy house, we may easily conclude that its riches are still increasing. The annual revenue of the *santa casa* in land, &c. is between twenty-seven and thirty thousand crowns, beside presents and votive donations. They count Loretto to be the most sacred place under heaven. The chief business of the inhabitants

is making rosaries, images of the Virgin Mary, &c. and these are sold in booths or stands at a cheap rate.

Beside the conformity of compartments between the temples of the ancient and modern Romans, all being alike divided into chancels, naves, aisles, galleries, porches, porticos, &c. there is one point which plainly demonstrates that the church of Rome has copied after, and taken her model from the heathens and not from the Jews. It is evident from the eighth chapter of Ezechiel\* compared with Exod. xxvii. 9. 16. xxxvi. 33. Levit. xvi. 14. Joseph, lib. 3. Antiq. cap. 5. that the situation of the temple of Jerusalem, was in direct opposition to that of the heathen temples, the door being at the east-end, and the altar at the west, so that, when the priest offered sacrifice at the altar, he always looked towards the west; whereas the door of the heathen was at the west-end, and the altar at the east, as we learn from Vitruvius, a famous engineer and projector in Augustus's time, whose words are to the following purpose†: "Let those, who pray or offer sacrifice, look towards the rising sun; for it is necessary that the altars and statues of the gods shall stand at the east-end of the temples." This conformity Counsellor du Choul acknowledges in these words. "The ancient Romans offered their sacrifices and performed their devotions with their faces towards the east as we do to this day. This Porphyry shews where he says, that the altars and statues of the gods must always be at the east-end of the temples. And this, I think, he has taken from the architecture of Vitruvius, where he speaks of the situation of the temples of the immortal gods." Now let any man examine all the churches in christendom and see whether the old heathen

\* V. 16.

† lib. 4. C. 5



plan be not faithfully observed and executed every where, and whether the high altar be not always at the east-end of the church.\*

All those who are acquainted with the classics must own, that the heathens looked upon wells and fountains as sacred to certain divinities whom they called Nymphs, &c. and to whom they offered sacrifices and other devotions as being the patrons and presidents of such places. The same notions and practices have been continued all along to our days, whereof there are several instances in this kingdom. Upon those occasions, it is usual with people to say: 'When is the patron of—? let us go to the patron; we saw an angel descend into the well; we had a great many masses and a sermon at the patron; we performed several rounds upon our knees about the well; we danced at the patron; there were several killed in a quarrel at the patron; several women returned home with child from the patron.'

The reason the council of Trent assigns to oblige christians to worship the relics of saints, is, because according to that council, people reap many benefits by it.† This was the very notion the old heathens entertained of the bodies and relics, of their heroes. For they looked upon them to be the protectors, and as it were the tutelar gods of the places of their repose. Thus the Egyptians, as St. Epiphanius tells us, performed extraordinary

\* I know a priest who built a chapel on the plan of the temple of Jerusalem, with the door at the east-end and the altar at the west. When his bishop was informed of it, he ordered the whole work to be thrown down in order to give it the opposite form. This being not complied with, occasioned an accumulated charge of innovation and heresy against the priest, who, not being able to bear the yoke of popery any longer, manfully shook it off, and openly embraced the protestant religion.

† *Sanctorum quoque martyrum aliorumque... Sancta Corpora...*, a fidelibus veneranda esse, per quæ multa beneficia a Deo hominibus præstantur, eosque qui affirmant Sanctorum reliquiis venerationem atque honorem non deberi .... dammandos esse, Sess. 25 decret. de invocatione Sanctorum.

devotions at the grave where Jeremy the prophet was buried, because they thought he protected them from asps and crocodiles. And Elian the historian tells us, that a great contest happened, between the successors of Alexander the great, who should have his body, thinking that it would bring peace and good luck with it wherever it was.

Temples and altars were employed by the heathens not only for the purposes of religious worship but also as sanctuaries for criminals. There were indeed such places formerly in Israel,\* but it was only for such as committed manslaughter by accident and without design; for such as were guilty of wilful murder were to be dragged even from the altar† and put to death. It was the old Romans, who were originally no better than a pack of banditti, that first appointed sanctuaries for all kinds of criminals, in order by that means, to people their new city. For Romulus‡ granted a general amnesty to all such as should take refuge in a temple, which he ordered to be built in a certain grove for that purpose. Afterwards all the Roman altars were privileged, as may be seen in several passages in Plautus, where the slaves who committed any crime say, that they are repairing to the altars for refuge. The church of Rome has adopted the same system as appears from the words of the Jesuit Suares§: ‘In the new law, says he, all churches, church-yards, and religious houses are so many sanctuaries for criminals: so that we have more places of refuge than the old Jews had. For in the old law there was no sanctuary but for involuntary homicides, and even those could be hauled out of their retreats for the purpose of an inquest. But now there are sanctuaries allowed for almost all kinds of crimes.’

\* Duët. 19. 2. 9.

† Exod. 21. 14.

‡ Tit, Liv. l. 1.

§ de immunitat. Ecclesiast.

A custom which we see the wiser heathens laughed at as ridiculous and superstitious, has been carried to such extravagance and folly in the church of Rome, that it is usual in this kingdom to erect altars abroad in the fields, and, having gathered whole herds of oxen together, to sprinkle them with holy water and say masses for them to cure them of the murrain,

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### OF BEADS, ROSARIES, &c.

It was from the heathens as I have already hinted, that the church of Rome has borrowed the model of her breviaries, canonical hours, small offices, &c. with the endless repetitions of *responsories*, *Kyrie eliesons*, *Dominis vobiscums*, *Ora pro nobis's*, *Ave Marias's*, &c. The heathens thought, when their task of prayers and repetitions was performed, the gods must be pleased, and, consequently, must grant them whatever they called for. But as the most minute article was of the greatest importance with them, and as if religion consisted in mechanical devotions and repetitions, they judged of the weight of their prayers by the number and measure of them; and, therefore, to prevent mistakes in reckoning, they made use of little globes or balls strung upon a thread to count their prayers upon. This is the origin of the popish beads and rosaries as Counsellor du Choul acknowledges, page 255, where he exhibits the figure of one of those old rosaries which he took from an ancient medal.

Pentheus the son of Echion and Agave, who was torn in pieces by his mother and sisters for laughing at the bacchanalian rites and revellings, having been once at Thebes,\* and seeing crowds of men

\* Ovid. *Metam.* l. 3.



and women running thro' the streets at the sound of drums, ringing of bells, &c. asked them : " What is the meaning of this wild enthusiasm ? How can the ringing of your bells and the like, make such a sudden change in you ? " The same question may be put to the church of Rome, how comes it that she is seized with those sudden fits of enthusiasm every day in the year ? For, in popish countries, the bell called the *Angelus Domini* or the *Ave Maria* is rung regularly every day, morning, noon, and evening ; at which every one, all on a sudden, uncovers himself and falls to say his *Angelus Domini*, &c. at every toll of the bell in honour of the Virgin Mary, the empress, queen, and mother of all the gods. And when they carry their host thro' the streets they ring a little bell, at the sound of which all that are within hearing, fall upon their knees at once to adore and mutter some prayers between their teeth. The first time that I met this host in the streets of Paris, I only took off my hat and bowed being loth to kneel in the puddle ; at which the clergy stopped, thinking I was an heretic, but when they found I was an Irish priest they let me go.

The Roman children, especially those of rank, wore, about their necks, certain golden ornaments called *bullæ*, made in the form of a heart but hollow within, which were looked upon as antidotes against witchcraft, &c. The first hint of this superstitious notion and custom was taken from the old Egyptians.\* An exact knowledge of the several degrees of the elevation of the river Nile being of the utmost consequence to the whole Egyptian colony, they took care to express the rise and progress of the inundation by a column, marked with one or more lines in form of a cross,

\* See History of Poetic. Heaven. Vol. I.

and surmounted with a ring or a circle to characterize Providence which governed this wonderful incident of nature, and sometimes by a long pole terminated like a T or crossed with one or more transverse pieces in form of a cross. As these symbols, like the rest, were always posted up in proper places for public notice, they were sometimes contented with a small T or cross hung up by the link of a chain. This manner of hanging a little cross to a chain was, in the beginning, only for the sake of conveniency; at most it signified only the several increases of the Nile subjected and, as it were chained to certain rules; or the safety of Egypt procured by the regularity of observations and precautions. But when the people fell into idolatry, these little symbols, like the rest, took a strange turn in the minds of the people, especially the neighbouring nations who had no immediate connexion with the necessities of Egypt.

As all things were symbolized among the Egyptians, the Nile, their greatest enemy had it's proper symbols too; viz. a crocodile, a sea-horse, a dragon, a serpent, &c. fit by it's mischievous nature to characterize the mischievous effects of the thing signified. When the original meaning of the symbols was forgotten, the symbolical dragon or serpent was understood to mean some ill-minded spirit or being, some evil principle that was always intent upon doing mischief to mankind. And as a little cross hung to a chain (for the Egyptian symbols were still preserved every where) bore a visible analogy to an enemy, it was conceived to mean that the evil spirit or principle, the great enemy of mankind, was chained and disarmed by a cross held in the hand of some friendly power that constantly watched to avert all evil from them.

We have seen how the cross, as well entire as abridged, was the mark of the increase of the Nile because it was the measure of it, and how it was in the confusion of the succeeding times conceived to signify the great enemy of mankind chained up and disarmed. Now this cross which, in their vulgar writing, as likewise in the ancient Hebrewic characters and in Greek and the Latin alphabet, was the letter *tau* or T, necessarily began the word *typhon* written in the current hand. Hence this figure, tied up with the link of a chain, or detained by a hand, appeared to them an abbreviated character designed to signify *typhon* chained up and disarmed; or, which was the same thing to them, the deliverance from all evil. The custom they adopted in consequence of this notion, viz. of hanging a cross or captive *typhon* about the neck of children of sick persons, &c. appeared so beneficial and so important that it was adopted by other nations. The children and the sick most commonly wore a ticket wherein was a cross or a T which they looked upon as a powerful preservative. In process of time other characters were substituted in the room of a cross or a T, which was at first engraved on the ticket, but of which the other nations understood neither the meaning nor the intention. But although these preservatives assumed different figures and forms according to the different notions and devotions of the people, yet they every where had names or attributes expressive of their first meaning. Thus the *bullæ romanæ* or the little figures of bubbles or hearts, that were hung about the necks of children, were called *amolimenta malorum*, amulets or appended preventives of all evil. Thus also the little coins or plates, which people wore about their necks for this purpose, and which were stamped with a cross or a T, or with the figure of the sun,



moon, or any other planet or constellation, &c. were, in the east called, *tselamin* talismans or images. Here is the origin of those tickets or gospels, *Agnus Dei's* &c. that are used in the church of Rome for the same old superstitious purpose. The tickets called gospels, which they hang about people's necks or stitch up in their clothes, are marked, on the inside, with one, two, or three crosses; and, on the outside, with a large cross. The cross that bishops and abbots wear about their necks is but a small one; but that, which is carried out before them in procession or otherwise, is, in general, like the large Egyptian cross with two or three transverse pieces, to shew that it is to the Egyptian cross they conformed and not to the cross that Christ was crucified upon: for every ploughman in Christendom sufficiently knows that his cross had but one transverse piece. Nay, they sometimes put a cross with two or three transverse pieces in the hand of our Saviour whereby they make him one of the Egyptian priests whose business it was to hold, or set up a cross, to inform the public of the several increases of the swell of the Nile.

In order to conform, in every respect, to the heathen amulets and talismans, the church of Rome has, to what I have already mentioned, added *agnus Dei's* or little images, of a lamb, made of a compound of virgin-wax, balm, and consecrated oil, which they hang about children's and other people's necks for the above superstitious purposes. The pretended properties and virtues of those popish talismans are described by pope Urban the fifth, in the verses hereunder written\* which he sent

\* Balsamus & munda cera cum Chrismatis unda  
 Conficiunt agnum quod munus do tibi magnum.  
 Fulgura desursum depellit, omne malignum.  
 Peccatum frangit, ut Christi sanguis, & angit.  
 Prægnans servatur, simul & partus liberatur.

with one of those talismans to Constantinople to be presented to the emperor, who, if he had right notions of the christian religion and Roman language, must have despised the present as much as the poetry, Although I condemn the custom of praying for the dead, yet I would not quarrel with such a poet for saying: *de profundis clamavi*. When the people get a habit of romancing, there are no bounds to their extravagance. This was Urban's case; he ascribes more power and virtue to those talismans than can with propriety be ascribed to the blood of Christ itself. "They prevent the ill effects of thunder and lightning. They preserve pregnant women from miscarriages, and procure a happy delivery. They grant spiritual

*Dona defert dignis, virtutem destruit ignis.*

*Portatus munde de fluctibus eripit undæ.*

They ascribe much the same virtues to what they call a revelation made to St. Bridget, which, they say, was found in writing under a tomb-stone in Jerusalem. Whoever carries this revelation about him, and says so many *Paters* and *Ave's* every day for fifteen years, will, it is pretended, see the virgin Mary before his death. The pregnant woman that carries it about her shall never miscarry. The house it is in shall never be burnt. The person who carries it about him shall never be drowned, &c. &c. They have several other amulets for the purpose of bridling the power of evil spirits. For, like the old heathens, they impute the evils of life to the influence of fairies and other like imaginary beings. Beside the cross of straw or some other matter, that they fix upon their doors to keep off those evil spirits, they nail a piece of iron to the door-sill; for the people of this kingdom believe that metal to have been impregnated with such a virtue by St. Patrick's benediction. When they are brewing they run a coal of fire which they call an Angel, into the malt when mashed. They keep fire near the churn and will suffer no fire to be carried out of the house while the milk is in churning, for fear the witches should carry away the butter. They also bind their churns with quickbeam for the same purpose. They suppose the air to be divided into several high roads infested by a certain kind of petty robbers, which pope Gregory the first calls *quidam latrunculi*, who rob the passengers of their spiritual treasures. To rout these robbers the bells were ordered to be rung. For when the Bishop baptizes a bell, he prays that it may be endued with a power of terrifying and dispersing the powers of the air. This superstitious notion they have from the old heathens, who were of opinion, as may be seen in Theocritus's pharmaceutria or sorceress, that, the ringing of bells had the virtue of chasing away demons and dispersing ghosts and spectres.

gifts to the worthy. They extinguish fires and preserve from drowning."

Cardinal Baronius, in his church-annals, year 58, acknowledges this conformity between popery and paganism. "Such as are baptized, says he, carry an *agnus Dei* about their necks through a devotion sprung from the superstition of the Gentiles, who hung little bottles about their children's necks by way of preservatives against charms and enchantments. These bottles were made in the form of a heart to remind them that to be a man one must have heart, The christians in like manner carry the image of a lamb, to learn by his example to be meek and humble of heart."

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## ARGUMENTS AND MEANS

PRACTISED BY THE CHURCH OF ROME FOR  
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HER RELIGION.

As all nature is in a decay, the antiquity of any thing is but an equivocal argument of it's soundness or goodness; and, therefore, a man that values any thing merely for that quality, gives room to suspect that his taste is vitiated, and that he likes nothing but what is musty and rotten. There is perhaps, no argument urged by papists against protestants, that betrays the cause of property more than this plea of antiquity; and that for two reasons: 1st, because, if antiquity was a genuine mark and note of true religion, the heathen would carry the point from the Jewish and christian, as it is older than either. 2dly, because popery, strictly speaking, is nothing but the old heathen religion as I have already proved; then to plead the antiquity of popery would be to plead the antiquity of heathenism, and therefore every true



christian ought to disclaim such an antiquity. But as popery in an enlarged sense is a corruption of the christian religion, a compound of heathenism and christianity; and, as I have already demonstrated that this is an innovation of later date than the christian establishment; I shall here only show that this plea of antiquity is an argument that the church of Rome has borrowed from her heathen ancestors.

Never did the popish divines urge this argument with greater spirit and eloquence in favour of their religion, than the heathens did in favour of their own. "Our temples and our sacred rites, says Cecilius, are venerable for their antiquity." "Our mysteries, said the pagans to the christians,\* are of a more ancient date than yours; therefore they are better established and authorised than yours are." To which Arnobius replied: "Forsooth, as if we did not know that antiquity is a teeming source of error; and as if those who lived before us could not hear and believe a falshood?" Symmachus in his defence of idols addressed to the emperors Theodosius and Arcadius, speaks thus: "If an immemorial antiquity can give sanction to religion, we ought to adhere to that creed which has been confirmed by a long succession of ages. We ought to tread in the steps of our fathers as they have done before us. Suppose Rome appeared before you and accosted you in the following manner: "Illustrious princes consider the great age I have attained to by means of my sacred ceremonies. Permit me to observe the rites I have learned from my ancestors, and that I have no reason to be ashamed of. As I am free I beg I may be allowed to live as I have done hitherto. 'Tis those divine rites that have brought the world into subjection to my laws. 'Tis this religion that

\* Apud Arnob.

has drove Hannibal from my walls and the Gauls from the capitol. Have I then outlived so many hardships to be reprehended in my old age? Though I were still capable of understanding such instructions as people would give me, yet it is too late; It is a shame for a person to begin to learn when he is grown old." To this St. Ambrose answers: "let Rome rather say: I am not ashamed to reform in my old days. Old age ought to blush for shame when it is incorrigible."

We may see in this discourse of Symmachus, that the heathens not only valued themselves for their antiquity, but also grounded their religion upon the authority of their forefathers, who handed it down successively to their children. This is a common resource with all those whose institutions are ill grounded, as may be instanced in the discourse of the Samaritan woman, who, in support of her superstitious worship, alleged the authority of her ancestors. "Our fathers, says she\*, worshipped in this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." She opposes the tradition of her fathers to the express command of God for worshipping in Jerusalem only.† People are, generally, so prejudiced in favour of their ancestors that they think it would be blasphemous to call their wisdom in question; and that to innovate or reform their institutions would be sapping the foundations of the universe, and violating the respect due to the most sacred things in the world. People would rather be wrong with them than right with others. This is the enthusiastic spirit of the church of Rome, whose arguments consist mostly of quotations from holy fathers, who are sometimes called the ancient oracles, the old staunch oaks of Dodona, &c. though such arguments are, generally, no

\* John 4. 20.

† Deut. 12. 5.

better than patch-work as a certain great author says\*:

Some for renown on scraps of learning dote,  
And think they grow immortal as they quote,  
To patch-work learned quotations are allied,  
Both seem to make our poverty our pride.

We are therefore to lay no stress, in point of controversy, upon their doctrines, but according as we find them conformable to scripture. They may be a help to us towards ascertaining the genuine sense of it, and that is all. Consequently, we are not to look upon them as authentic to the last jot as the gloss, upon St. Austin's words inserted in the canon law,† says. Nor did the fathers pretend that their works should be looked upon in that light, as appears from the same words of St. Austin. "Tis therefore an absurd thing to cry out with the heathens that their religion is that of their fathers. For an argument that proves too much, proves nothing; this argument proves as much for the heathens as it does for the papists, therefore it proves nothing. Wherefore St. Peter calls it‡ a vain conversation received by tradition from fathers and grandfathers. Religion is of divine original; it is descended from heaven: therefore we are to receive no point of doctrine but such as brings those divine credentials along with it. The fathers themselves§ tell us that they are not our masters but the expounders of the words of the master, and that the source of all evil is the want of understanding the scriptures.

To prove that the heathen religion was the best the old Romans alleged the extent of their empire,

\* Dr. Young.

† Noli meis literis quasi canonicis scripturis inservire. Sed in illis & quod non credebas, cum inveneris, incunstanter crede; in istis autem quod certum non habebas, nisi certum intellexeris, noli firmum tenere. Can. 3. dist. 9.

‡ Pet. 1. 18. 9. in Colloss. § Aug. de bono Viduit. Chrysost. hom.



the glory of their victories and triumphs, their riches, their magnificence, &c. Symmachus in order to gain the emperors Theodosius and Arcadius over to his party, represents the many glorious victories that Rome obtained over all nations while she continued to worship idols. It was upon this consideration that the Jews in the prophet Jeremy's time declared themselves in favour of the heathen religion. 'We will not hearken unto thee,' said they to the prophet, "but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven and to pour out our drink-offerings unto her as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out our drink offerings unto her; we have wanted all things and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burnt incense to the queen of heaven and poured out our drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes\* to worship her and pour out our drink-offerings unto her without our men?" Those Jews thought the heathen religion preferable to the Jewish, because of the prosperity that attended the former, whereas by adhering to the latter they were exposed to persecution. The Muhammedans likewise reason after the same manner, and ground the compara-

\* Here is an additional proof that the foundation of the Collyridian heresy and the popish worship of the virgin Mary, was laid a long time before the birth of Christ. Though the institutions of the unbloody sacrifice of the mass is attributed by the writers I have already cited, to Numa Pompilius who began his reign 714 years before Christ, yet we may plainly infer from the words of Jeremy, who lived about a hundred years only after Numa Pompilius, that the mass was celebrated in the eastern countries before Numa's time, and that he only adopted it into his church at Rome.

tive excellence of their religion upon the many victories they gained over the christians, and the number of them that they detain still in servitude. The cant, among them is, that passage of the Koran where it is said that God raised up Mahomet for the extirpation of christians.

If Jesus Christ was upon earth and exercised such cruelties upon people on the account of religion, we might tell him by an *argumentum ad hominem* that he was as great an impostor as ever Mahomet was. I have hinted already, that an universal temporal supremacy in any state of nature is contrary to the order of infinite wisdom. We know by the light of nature and revelation, that the temporal peace and happiness of mankind was, and necessarily should have been the immediate object of the mission of the Messias; that consequently when he came he should have prescribed such laws and established such a religion upon earth, as were most conducive to this end. All this has been foretold of the Messias. Accordingly when our Saviour came into the world, he fulfilled all those predictions, otherwise, if there was one single character of the Messias wanting in him, he would not have been the person foretold by the prophets. He proved by the whole tenour of his life and actions that he came to establish peace among men. There is nothing that he was more averse to than worldly pride and dominion. Now it is evident not only from the nature of the thing, but also from the experience of past ages, that nothing could be more destructive of the peace and happiness of mankind than an universal temporal supremacy; consequently no one but an impostor, usurper and tyrant could pretend to such a supremacy. And what is the tendency of those persecutions on the score of religion, but to establish such a monarchy upon earth? What could

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any universal temporal monarch attempt or pretend to, but what the bishops of Rome have done under a cloak of religion, since the first establishment of popery to this day? What taxes, what subsidies, what levies could any pretender to universal temporal monarchy raise, what arbitrary jurisdiction could he exercise over kings and princes, what measures could he take to extend his dominion, but what have been practised by the bishops of Rome.

The old Romans in support of their religion alleged that their city was the capitol of the empire of the world; the centre of true religion; the city of God; the abode of the gods; the mother, mistress, and goddess\* of all the nations of the earth. The modern Romans say in like manner, that Rome is the mother and mistress of all churches, the centre of ecclesiastic unity; the eternal city; the see, the source, the fountain-head of all truth. "The glory and majesty of the eternal city, says Blondus in his *Rome restored*, subsists still; it flourishes still in its full prime and vigour: it bears the sway still over all kingdoms and nations; and to maintain it there is no need of squadrons of horse and foot; it subsists still because Jesus Christ our supreme monarch has fixed the centre of religion in Rome, and made it the bulwark, the fortress, the citadel of religion."

The most of the Roman historians speak of the miracles and wonders that were wrought by the heathens to authorise and justify their manner of worship. They tell us that Nævius a poet, who lived about 150 years before the birth of Christ, cut a large stone in two halves with one stroke of a razor; that a vestal virgin took up a sieve full of water and held it so for a considerable time; that the emperor Vespasian cured a blind man by

\* Vid. Lucan, Martial, Claudianum. &c.



rubbing his eyes with his spittle, and also cured a lame man with a touch of his heel; that the emperor Adrian wrought the like miracles not only in his life-time but also after his death, by means of his relics: with numberless other pretended miracles which were, as Tertullian says, so many illusions of Satan [to] authorise idolatry. The church of Rome boasts likewise of her miracles, and will have them, tho' nothing in the world can be more equivocal than such an argument, to be a note of the true church. She is startled at what our Saviour and the apostles foretold,\* viz. That Antichrist would appear by the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, so that the very elect themselves, if it were possible, would be deceived and seduced. No people ever practised those impostures with more success than the old heathen priests.† What favoured them favoured the moderns, viz. the stupid ignorance and superstitious credulity of the times. Accordingly we find that the miracles the popish legends are stuffed with, were dated from the dark ages of the church, from the Indies and other distant countries. But when they were brought to the test in broad day light, they were found to be nothing but the impostures of monks, &c. or the illusions of the ignorant people who in matter of supersti-

\* Math. 24. 2. Thess. 2. 9.

† The *Vetiloquium* is an instance of it, an imposture that has obtained credit in all ages among heathens, Jews, and christians, as appears by the *Engastromuthoi* of the Greeks and the *Ventriloqui* of the ancient and modern Romans. The cheat was carried on in the following manner: A cave was contrived beneath the place where the prophet or prophetess sat, from whence certain retainers or priests, appointed for that purpose, gave the responses, as it were, from the regions of the dead. As the voice was heard from below, it gave occasion to imagine that the prophet spoke *per inferiores partes ventris*. Thus it was that the witch of Endor imposed upon Saul who believed that she spoke *de profundis*, because the voice came from a proper situation to raise that illusion and secure the reputation of the oracle.

tion see not what is before their eyes. This is acknowledged by the popish writers themselves who, as may be seen elsewhere in the course of this work, loudly complain of those pious frauds and impostures. Nicolaus de Lira, a doctor of Paris, who flourished in the thirteenth century, says, that the most of these miracles are knavery and tricks practised by priests. Tournely and the best modern authors, that I have seen in Paris, confess that there are too many pious frauds and impostures practised in the church. 'Twas the force of truth and matter of fact that extorted this confession from them. For several crucifixes, statues and images that were reported to have sweated blood and shed tears, were found so constructed, that any man might work the miracle when he pleased by filling certain cavities, or conveniences, contrived behind, with blood or water, and squeezing it out with the help of springs.

The heathens usurped such an absolute jurisdiction over the souls of men, that they pretended to dispose of them in this, and the other world as they pleased. This jurisdiction they sometimes exercised by excommunications whereby they devoted, that is delivered up, *diris omnibus*, to Pluto and all the furies and devils in hell, the souls and bodies of such as they deemed guilty of heresy, schism, sacrilege, rebellion or the like. Among the many instances, that history furnishes us with, the case of Alcibiades, which happened about 413 years before the birth of Christ, is a sufficient proof of my assertion. When he was out-lawed upon an impeachment of treason, sacrilege, &c. the priests of Athens fulminated an excommunication against him. And when he was reconciled, the excommunication was taken off, *resecratus est* as C. Nepos expresses it. The church of Rome has likewise usurped such an

absolute jurisdiction over the souls of men, that all those, as she pretends, who die under her censures go directly to hell, as being authoritatively delivered up by her into the hands of the devil; *auctoritate Domini nostri Jesu Christi ac beatorum Apostolorum Petri & Pauli. Nobis concessa committimus animam tuam Diabolo.\** She fulminates those excommunications against people, even after their deaths, so that if their bodies are buried in, what she calls, consecrated ground, they must be dug up and buried along with cats and dogs, or thrown to the fishes, or burnt, and the ashes scattered in the air with eternal execration.

That the heathens have exercised the greatest cruelties upon the bodies of christians and all others who opposed their doctrines is notorious. That the church of Rome has adopted the same methods and means and practised the same cruelties upon protestants and all others, who opposed her since the first establishment of popery, is notorious likewise. I shall therefore only show how contrary this spirit of persecution is to that of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the disciples called for fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans for refusing to accommodate him by the way as he was going up to Jerusalem, he very calmly but severely rebuked them saying: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."† That is, you own yourselves to be my disciples; but, do you consider what spirit you are now governed by? Not that surely which my doctrine is to mould you into; which is not a furious but a mild, not a persecuting but a merciful, not a destructive but a saving

\* It is certain that the heathens were guilty of murder in burying the vestal virgins alive, and yet the high priest as Plutarch tells us, consecrated that action to the gods by lifting up his hands to heaven and mumbling certain prayers to himself.

† Luke C. 9. 55. 56.



spirit: tender of the lives and interests of men, even those who are our greatest enemies.

From this discourse it evidently follows that a persecuting spirit is directly opposite to the design and spirit of the christian religion, and that it cannot be justified upon any pretence whatsoever of zeal for God or religion. It is opposite to the main and fundamental precepts of the gospel, which command us to love one another, and to love all men even our very enemies. They are so far from permitting us to persecute those who hate us, that they forbid us to hate those who persecute us. They require us to be merciful as our father, which is in heaven is merciful. To be kind and tender-hearted, forbearing with each other and forgiving one another, if any man hath a quarrel against any, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us. And to put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, meekness, and long suffering. To follow peace with all men and to show all meekness to all men. And particularly the pastors of the church are charged to set this example to the rest of mankind. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, says the scripture,\* but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will." Now to all those precepts nothing can be more opposite than persecutions and cruelties, treacherous conspiracies and bloody massacres, to extirpate all those who differ from us in matters of religion; and instead of instructing in meekness, those who oppose themselves, to convert them with fire and faggot, and to teach them as Gideon

\* 2 Tim. 2. 24. & Seq.

did the men of Succoth with briars and thorns,\* and instead of waiting for their repentance, and endeavouring to rescue them from the snares of the devil, to put them quick into his hands and dispatch them to hell as fast as possible. If the precepts of christianity can be counteracted, surely that cannot be done more grosly, more palpably, than by such practices.

This persecuting spirit is also opposite to the great example of our blessed Saviour. It was prophesied by him that he should be the prince of peace, and should make it the chief business of his life to make peace in heaven and earth; to reconcile men to god and to each other; to stifle the feuds and extinguish the animosities that the world was fermented with; to make the lamb and the wolf lie down together, that there might be no more destroying in God's holy mountain.† That is, that this persecuting spirit, which had so much prevailed in the world before, should then be banished out of all christian societies. And in conformity to these predictions, when our Saviour was born into the world, the angels are said to have intoned that heavenly anthem: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will among men."—And when he appeared in the world his manner was meek and peaceable, and his whole life full of charity and mercy. He made it his business to be beneficent to all, to seek and save that which was lost. He went about doing good to the bodies and to the souls of men. His miracles were not destructive but healing and charitable. He could if he pleased, have confounded his enemies and thundered out death and destruction against the infidel world.

Now what hath the church of Rome to plead for her cruelty to people on the score of religion,

\* Judges. 8. 16.

† Is. 65. 25.

which the disciples might not much better have pleaded for themselves in their case? What hath she to say against those who are the objects of her cruelty, which would not have held against the Samaritans? Does she practice those severities out of zeal for truth and for the honour of God and religion? Why upon these very accounts it was that the disciples called for fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans? Is the church of Rome persuaded that those whom she persecutes are heretics and schismatics, and that no punishment can be too great for such offenders? So the disciples were persuaded with regard to the Samaritans, and upon much better grounds, for the disciples had some excuse in their case which the church of Rome has not, and that was ignorance; and this apology our Saviour himself made for them when he said: 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.'

Hence it is plain, what kind of spirit it was that our Saviour here rebukes in his disciples. It was a persecuting and destructive spirit, contrary to the distinguishing character of the christian religion. But yet this may be said in mitigation of their fault, that they themselves offered no violence to their enemies. They left it to God, and no doubt, would have been well pleased that he had manifested his severity upon them by sending down fire from heaven to consume them. But there is a much worse spirit than this in the world, which is not only contrary to christianity, but also to the common principles of natural religion and even to humanity itself, which by falsehood and treachery, by secret plots and conspiracies, or by open sedition and rebellion, by an inquisition or a massacre, by deposing and killing crowned heads, by fire and sword, by the ruin of their country and betraying it into the hands of foreigners, in a word, by dissolving all the bands



of society and subverting the peace and order of the world. Now let any man of unprejudiced and impartial judgment bring the bloody tragedies and cruelties that have been from time to time acted upon the stage of popery to the test of these reflections, and I will appeal to himself whether the popish religion be not as great an enemy to the religion of Jesus Christ, as ever the old heathen was, or rather whether they be not, at least in this respect, one and the same. It is impossible, without shuddering, to read the history of the slaughter of the protestants of France begun on the eve of St. Bartholomew's day, 1572. There were, according to the popish writers themselves, at least thirty thousand massacred, in a few days, in Paris and other cities of France. Their bodies were dragged along like dead dogs, and some thrown to the fishes, others hung upon gibbets, and the rest buried in ditches and pits. A more execrable barbarous action, than this, as Prefixe, who was archbishop of Paris in the following century, and other French writers confess could not be, yet nothing could be greater than the rejoicings made on this occasion throughout France, Spain, and Italy. They went in procession to the churches, they returned public thanks to God, they sung *Te Deums*, they celebrated jubilees, they struck medals, &c. and it was enacted, that St. Bartholomew's day should ever after be kept with double pomp and solemnity. If this be the religion of God, the gospel must be the religion of the devil.

As the conformity or rather uniformity, of popery with paganism is evident from what has been hitherto said, it must seem strange that any of the Romish communion, who are conscious of it should pretend to justify it. And yet it is certain there are several who, far from owning this woe-

ful corruption and shameful degeneracy seem rather to glory in it.

Nothing could be more simple than the manner of worship of the apostles and primitive christians. But in process of time the manna lost it's relish and nothing could please the taste but the old onions and flesh-pots of Egypt. The religion of the gospel appeared too naked and plain, and therefore it was thought necessary to adorn and set it off with festoons of ceremonies. Those who call themselves the vicars of Jesus Christ and successors of St. Peter, thought themselves wiser than either. Those children of Adam were seized with the vanity of their old father and vied with God himself in wisdom and knowledge. The disciples would know more than their master, and thus it was that human ignorance and presumption by degrees introduced those superstitious rites and ceremonies into the christian religion, and opened a door to a thousand abuses whereby the administration of the mysteries of religion has degenerated from the purity and simplicity of their first institution; for the multiplicity and confusion of the rites and ceremonies wherewith the christian religion is obnubilated and defaced by popish innovations and corruptions, are in nothing short of the superstitious ceremonies and practices of the Jews, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans put together. This alone would be enough to ground a most reasonable prejudice against popery; for as truth never looks more beautiful and lovely than when it is *Simplex Munditijs*, so the more absurd and ridiculous any thing is in itself, the more solemn pretences it requires to set it off.

Now what is deplorable in the case is, that it is those solemn pretences and this mystical pageantry that the poor ignorant people are mostly struck

with. Nothing takes with them better than a ceremonial which promises a great deal and costs but little. They swallow the poison of heathen superstitions without reluctance, because they receive the cup out of christian hands. They are ignorant of the cheat that is put upon them, nor will those, who know it, disabuse them because they find it their interest to keep, nay to confirm them in their ignorance.

Did not St. Paul condemn them when he opposed the Jewish doctors who would fain bring the christians under the yoke of the ceremonial law, as the popish doctors would fain bring the whole world under the yoke of the rites and ceremonies of the old heathens? "Beware," says St. Paul to the Colossians,\* "lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ — let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon or of the sabbath days—let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshy mind.—Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom, in will, worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." Who did our Saviour empower to sanctify abominations? The heathen rites, though they might be of an indifferent nature, i. e. neither good nor bad by nature, became unclean and

\* Coloss. 2. 8—23.



abominable by the use that was made of them as we learn from St. Paul, who speaking of the victims that were sacrificed by the heathens, forbids the Corinthians\* to eat of them because, though the flesh of the poor animals was equally good and wholesome whether offered to God or the devil, yet as they had been used for an idolatrous purpose, to partake of them would be to drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils.

Moses was so far from pretending to adopt or sanctify any of the heathen rites and customs, that on the contrary he prohibited the use of them under the severest penalties. Nothing could be more opposite to the heathen ceremonial than what he instituted. He not only forbade the making and worshipping the image or resemblance of God or any thing else in heaven or earth, but also instituted the Passover in direct opposition to the heathen ritual.

Here then we see how far the wise legislator Moses was from adopting or sanctifying any of the heathen rites and ceremonies. Here we see how minute, how particular he was in every circumstance, in order to wean the Hebrews from all the prejudices they had conceived in favour of the feasts and worship of the people of Egypt. To act in direct opposition to the Egyptians, he ordered the animal to be killed at the very time that he was honoured by the Egyptians. He ordered it to be roasted because the Egyptians boiled the flesh of their victims. Lastly he ordered them to besmear the upper parts of their doors with the animal's blood to inspire them with contempt for, and to make them act in opposition to the Egyptian practices.

In vain do they pretend that those heathen rites and practices are of their own nature indifferent,

\* 1 Corinth. 10

and therefore may be lawfully adopted and observed by christians. To the contrary, the most of them have been expressly forbidden by God himself. For instance, to set up a mortal man in the temple of God and to adore him as God ; to worship images of God or any other being ; to invoke and pray to angels and dead men and women ; to erect temples and altars and to offer incense and sacrifices to them ; to sacrifice the son of God in their honour ; to adore bread and wine and sticks and stones and bones, and old rags, &c. Can those abominations be sanctified ? Certainly, if the pope, as Bellarmin says, has the power of changing the nature of sin, and can turn virtue into vice, and vice into virtue, he can sanctify all the idolatries the heathens were ever guilty of, and turn them all into so many holy ceremonies. Then surely it is the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law that ought to have been adopted and sanctified and not those pagan abominations that are condemned, abhorred and detested by all true christians.

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## APPENDIX.

THAT scripture abounds with allegories and other figurative expressions is certain. In order therefore to distinguish the literal from the figurative sense, and to know when to follow the one rather than the other, we must observe the following rules :

1<sup>o</sup> As the end of our reading ought to be to learn and obey, we must endeavour to find out, and divest ourselves from all false opinions we might have received from education.

Most men by education are misled,  
They so believe because they are so bred,  
The priest continues what the nurse began,  
And thus the child imposes on the man.

DRYDEN.

2<sup>o</sup> As the literal sense of any expression is, in general the most natural, we must adhere to it preferable to the figurative, except where we find it to contradict the dictates of natural religion, reason, or common sense. Natural religion, or that notion of duty which God conveys to us through the channel of his works, is founded in the nature and eternal relations of things. The measure of the truth of it is the measure of the truth of all religion ; so that we cannot be sure of the truth of revelation but according as we are sure of the truth of this. The ideas of order, agreeableness, and conformity to reason, have something in them that is eternal, immutable and absolutely indispensible, as being likewise founded on the nature and eternal relations of things. The uniform, constant, and concurrent testimony of our senses, is of such certainty and importance, that it is the fundamental argument of the truth of all the facts recorded in scripture ; so that if such a testimony could be false in one instance whatsoever, the certainty and authority of all revelation would be entirely shaken and overthrown. For instance, when our Saviour appealed to the senses of the apostles for the truth of his resurrection, they might have answered that, indeed, he seemed to them to have flesh and bones, but that, perhaps, the testimony of their senses was false. If he had said that their testimony was faithful and true, and therefore was to be depended upon, they might have answered, that indeed they thought he said so, but that perhaps they misapprehended him ; perhaps they were deceived by their senses ; perhaps what he said was that the testimony of their senses was erroneous, and that what he meant was, that he had neither flesh nor bones as being nothing but a pure spirit.—Thus no man could ever be sure of the truth of any fact at all, if it were possible for the above described evidence of our senses to be false in any case whatsoever ; and thus should we of necessity be exposed to perpetual and irremediable error and delusion.

3<sup>o</sup> We must compare scripture with itself, and interpret what is obscure and ambiguous in one place, by what is clear and certain in another. Thus for instance :

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ?” Job. 14. 4.—“Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Psalm, 51. 5. — “The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born.” Psalm, 58. 3. — “Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb.” Is. 48, 8.—“Their malice was bred in them.” Wisd. 12. 10. — “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Is. 64, 6. — “We are by nature the children of wrath.” Eph. 2, 3.

These passages are to be explained by the following and the like : — “From my youth the poor was brought up with me, and I have guided the widow from my mother's womb.” Job. 31, 18. — “To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and it was created with the faithful in the womb, Ecclesiasticus 1, 14.

When the holy writers speak of the corruption and wickedness of mankind, they strain the expression and speak of it in a figurative manner, as if



it had been bred with them in the womb. Thus St. Paul says: "We were by nature the children of wrath," he does not mean that nature wherein we were born, but that second nature of evil habits we bring upon ourselves by sin.

It is impossible to attain to a right understanding of the new testament without a due regard to the style and phraseology of the old. For, it is natural and accordingly we find it true upon trial, that our Saviour, as he came, not to destroy, but to fulfil the law, has adopted the figures of speech and modes of expression that the law was delivered in.

The science of alogy, which first gave birth to the symbolical writing, and then to that taste for allegories which prevailed throughout the most part of the east, was brought to the greatest perfection among the old Jews. Hence it is that, though many of their figurative expressions, such as eating up a book, washing feet with butter, and the like, are seemingly harsh unnatural, and unintelligible, yet they were as well understood by them as modern forms of speaking are by us. Hence also it is that allegories and other figures of speech, as they make every thing about them clear and beautiful, frequently occur in their writings, as may be seen in the following and many other instances:

"They that EAT me, says Wisdom, shall yet be hungry, and they that DRINK me shall yet be thirsty." Eccles. 24. 21.—"Who so is simple," says the same Wisdom, "let him turn in hither—Come eat of my BREAD and drink of the WINE which I have mingled." Proverb. 9. 4.—"The soul of the transgressor shall EAT violence. Prov. 13. 2. and DRINK scolding and iniquity." Job. 34. 7.—"Every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters—come ye, buy and eat—buy wine and milk without money—hearken diligently unto me and EAT ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in FATNESS. Incline your ear and come unto me and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you." Is. 55. 1, 2, 3.—"I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job, 23. 12.—"Thy words were found and I did EAT them." Jerem. 15. 16.

It was usual with the holy writers in the old law to give the sign of any thing the name of the thing signified, and to express covenants, sacraments and last wills or testaments in a figurative manner. Thus the covenant which God made with all mankind in the person of Adam, is expressed.\* Thus the same covenant, when renewed in the person of Abraham,†, is by a figure of speech called circumcision because it was a sign or token of the covenant renewed with Abraham, as the rain-bow was a sign or token of it as renewed with Noah ‡ The paschal lamb is called the Lord's pass-over§ because it was a sign, a memorial, a commemoration of it. The seven kine and seven ears of corn are called seven years.¶ Ezekiel's hair is called Jerusalem.|| The last wills or testaments made by Jacob and Moses are so many chains of allegories as may be seen in Gen. 49 and Deuteronomy, 33.

This figurative style has been adopted by our Saviour and his apostles as appears by the following passages. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Matt 5. 6.—My meat is to do the will of him that sent me. John 4. 34.—He that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. John 6. 35.—I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever. John 6. 51.—If any man thirst let him come to me and drink. John 7. 37.—I am the door of the sheep. John 10. 7.—I am the resurrection and the life. John 11. 25.—I am the vine. John 15. 1.—Ye are the salt of the earth. Matt. 5. 13.—Ye are the light of the world.—Matt. 5. 14. This cup is the new testament. Luke 22. 20.—This is my body, i. e. a sign, memorial or commemoration of my incarnation, passion, &c. Matthew. 26. 26.—Christ is the righteousness and sanctification of men. I Cor. i. 30.—Those who are baptised are buried with Christ. Coloss. 2. 12.—Baptism is the washing of regeneration. Tit. 3. 5. We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. Eph. 5. 30.—The first rudiments of the Chris-

\* Gen. 3. 15.

† Gen. 17. 10.

‡ Gen. 9. 13.

§ Exod. 12. 11

¶ Gen. 41. 26.

|| Ezek 5. 5.

tian religion are by St. Peter \* called the milk of the word, and a more perfect knowledge of it is by St. Paul† called strong meat.

Upon the whole then it is apparent, that we are never to adhere to the letter of scripture but when it can bear the test of the foregoing rules. 'Tis not the letter of any law but the spirit and reason of it that makes law. I shall here give some instances of the gross and monstrous errors that people have been guilty of by sticking too close to the letter of scripture,

Our Saviour recommends to us in a proverbial manner to turn the other cheek to him who gives us a box; to return good for evil; to love our enemies; to judge not lest we be judged, &c. These and the like passages of scripture, by being taken too rigorously to the letter, gave occasion to many to think that it is not lawful for a christian to bear arms at all, nor to perform the function of a judge or that of an executioner, nor to take away another man's life even in one's own defence, nor to accuse any one of a crime punishable with death, nor even to go to law, &c. &c. Thus Tertullian in his book *de Idololatria*, and in another *de Corona militis* maintains, that it is not lawful for christians to bear arms in defence of the state, or in any other case whatsoever; and that a christian cannot lawfully perform the office of a judge or executioner. And in his book *de persecutione vitanda* he says, it is absolutely forbidden to fly in the time of persecution, or give money in order to avoid being put on the rack. And in his book *de patientia* he pretends it is an invasion of the divine prerogative to arrogate the right of defending one's self; that when our Saviour said; Judge not lest ye be judged, he required a patience carried to that pitch; for, says he who is it that does not judge another except one that is patient enough not to defend himself?

St. Cyprian in his book *de bono patientia* adopts Tertullian's maxims, and disclaims all right of self-defence; and highly extolls all those who suffered themselves to be murdered rather than attempt to defend themselves.

Lactantius likewise, in his book of divine institutions, maintains, that a christian ought not to bear arms, nor trade with any foreign country, nor accuse any one of a crime punishable with death as he would thereby be guilty of murder. St. Basil holds that he who gives another a mortal wound, tho' it be in his own defence, is guilty of murder; and that it is not lawful for christians ever to go to law, nor to swear even when it can be done with a safe conscience.

St. Ambrose maintains that a christian ought not to fight against a robber who attacks him; and lays it down as a maxim, that it is never lawful to preserve one's life by occasioning the death of another.

Our Saviour, in Math. 19. 12. says, there are some eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. The literal sense of these words has given occasion to many of the primitive christians to commit an inhuman and scandalous violence upon themselves. Origen is a notorious instance of it, for which he is highly extolled by many of the fathers. St. Jerom, in his commentaries upon the prophet Jonas, approves of the conduct of those who kill themselves for fear of losing their chastity. Nay the fathers have carried their enthusiasm in favour of continency to such a pitch, that several of them, for instance, Athenagoras the Athenian philosopher, Tertullian, Cyprian, Agustin, Ambrose, and Jerom, have disclaimed so bitterly against marriage in general that they prove nothing, or else that marriage is an indecent thing. As to second marriages, they expressly call them a decent adultery.

St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 7. 4. says: 'The wife hath not power of her own body but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body but the wife. Hence St. Austin concludes‡ that a husband may transfer to another man the right he has to his wife's body; and that a wife may dispose of her husband's body in like manner. Nay he and St. Ambrose plainly say, that before the days of Moses adultery was not forbidden.

The practice of constraint and persecution for religion's sake, has in a great measure taken its rise among christians from the literal sense of the

\* 1. Pet 2, 2.

† Heb. 5, 14.

‡ de civit, Dei. l. 16. c. 26.



following and such other passages of scripture, viz "and the Lord said unto his servant: go out into the high ways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." Luke 14. 23. Though nothing can be more directly contrary to all the lights of good sense, charity, natural equity, and the spirit of the gospel, than such a practice, yet nothing has been more frequently seen among christians, since the conversion of the heathen emperors to christianity, than chains, dungeons, proscriptions, massacres and bloody tragedies. It was a common saying with St. Augustin and others, "that all things belong to the faithful, and that the wicked have no right to what they profess." It is not to be wondered at then, that since the peace of the church was restored, this pernicious diabolical maxim should have been carried into execution by christians, even against each other with the utmost rage and fury. This same Augustin was so heated by his disputes with the Donatists, that he openly maintained that heretics ought to be persecuted and forced to embrace the orthodox faith or else to be utterly extirpated.

Gregory Nazianza exclaims furiously against the Arians and Macedonians for having the impudenc<sup>y</sup> to assemble together and form churches; and writes to Nectarius bishop of Constantinople, to represent to the emperor that what he had done in favour of the church would be of no service if the heretics should be allowed to assemble together.

Vigilantius, with the true spirit of a protestant and disciple of Jesus Christ, opposed the torrent of heathen corruptions that was pouring into the church in his century as I have already mentioned. When St. Jerome found that he could not confute him with solid arguments, he spirited up the populace and raised a violent persecution against him.

When the Arians and especially John, bishop of Jerusalem, began to avail themselves of the opinions of Origen, St. Jerome inveighed without mercy against this same Origen whom he had before extolled to the skies, and raised a violent persecution against the Origenists as he acknowledges in his writings against Rufinus.

As soon as St. Cyril of Alexandria was raised to the episcopal dignity, he persecuted the Novations, and routed the Jews out of Alexandria, and allowed the christians to plunder their goods, as also these of the Novation bishop. Like Thomas Becket of Canterbury, he was constantly encroaching upon the jurisdiction of the civil power. At last he and five hundred of his monks attacked the governor of the city, who was wounded by one of the monks, and would have been killed, had not their fury been stopped by the guards and people about him. And though the monk suffered upon the rack for high treason yet he was canonized as a saint by Cyril according to the ritual of those days.

Clement of Alexandria boasts of his practice of covering and perplexing things, that so none but such as are very intelligent and willing to take a great deal of pains might be able to comprehend them.

St. Jerom owns that in his polemic works, he only aimed at answering his adversaries, and puzzling them, without troubling himself whether what he said were true or not. And he justifies his conduct by the example of Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, and other apolc<sup>y</sup>sts for the christian religion, who, according to him, did the same against the Pagans; making use of very doubtful and problematical arguments, and maintaining, not what they thought, but what the interest of the dispute required. And he says, that in this he only imitates Jesus Christ and St. Paul, who, as he pretends, maintained both sides of the question according as it was convenient for them.

As the Fathers were thus upon the extreme; \* as they were indifferent

\* Nothing can be more extravagant or even nonsensical than what Clement of Alexandria says, viz: "that a true christian is free from even the most innocent passions, except such as regard the preservation of the body, as hunger and thirst, &c. and that Jesus Christ and his apostles had no passions; and that Jesus Christ himself had no sense either of pleasure or pain; and that he had no occasion to eat or drink; and that, if he did it, it was for fear of being taken for a spectre. This is like what is taught in some of their catechisms in Ireland, viz. that our saviour came out through the virgin's side as the rays of the sun pass through a pane of glass; which by the by destroys the ground of the purification of the virgin Mary." The same Clement says "that God gave the pagans the sun, moon and stars, that they might adore them and by that worship raise themselves to the true God."



which side of the question they maintained, or whether what they said were true or false, provided it served to puzzle and silence their adversaries; and as they pretend to justify their conduct by the example of our Saviour and his Apostles, what man of common sense would rest upon their authority in relation to the true sense of Scripture?

These few observations on the style of Scripture, and the authority of the Fathers, if duly considered, will enable my readers to conceive the force of the arguments I shall here propose against the doctrine of

## TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

There have been several Popish Divines, for instance bishop Fisher, who have candidly acknowledged, that it is impossible to prove this doctrine by Scripture, without what they call tradition, or the authority of the fathers. But to shew that the advocates for this doctrine have no better right than we have, to argue from, and rely upon the tradition of the first ages of the church, I shall here, to what I have already said, add the following arguments;—1st. It appears from the words of Valerius Maximus, that the heathens had their Eucharists or love feasts. In order, therefore, to raise the christian eucharist above the heathen, the apologists for the christian religion, in their usual declamatory strains, affected to call it the body and blood of Christ, which, according to what has been already observed, no more proves a real, than it does a figurative presence only.

2dly. A real death and burial with Christ in baptism, may as plainly be inferred from the declamations of the fathers upon the efficacy of that sacrament, as a real change of the bread in the eucharist; for their expressions are as high strained upon the one as upon the other.

3dly. It is certain that those fathers met with opposition upon the article of the eucharist. Now they spoke either in a popish or a protestant sense; this our adversaries allow, as they pretend they were all papists. If they spoke in a protestant sense, therefore, they were all protestants, notwithstanding the parade and triumph with which they were quoted by our adversaries. If they spoke in a popish sense, therefore, at least, many of those that opposed them were protestants. What signifies, then, what a few in every age should have said against many.

4thly. Some of the fathers, for instance Tertullian, say, that the hands of those who handle the body of Christ unworthily, ought to be cut off. Now it is evident that those words cannot be understood of transubstantiation. For the accidents and appearances of bread cannot be handled, because they are only affections of the mind. The body of Christ could not be handled, as it would be there only in the condition of a spirit; otherwise, our Saviour's argument to prove the reality of his resurrection, would have been absurd and illusive. Therefore those words must be understood of a figurative body in the sense of protestants, or of the bread become the body of Christ by a physical union in the sense of the Stercoranists. Nay, Tertullian himself seems to decide it, for he calls the sacramental bread the figure of Christ's body, to prove against Marcion that Christ had a real body as there could be no figure of a figure or spirit or phantom. But if Tertullian had maintained the doctrine of transubstantiation he would have been laughed at by Marcion, as his argument would rather have served to prove that Christ had only the accidents and appearance of a body. For Marcion might have thus retorted upon him; You say that the accidents and appearance of bread subsist in the sacrament without the substance of bread. Why then could not the accidents and appearance of a body subsist in Christ without the substance of a body? By this it is plain, that Tertullian's argument against Marcion would have been absurd if he had been a transubstantiationer. Nay, he was so far from it that Gregory de Valentia and other popish divines give him up. Besides there was no altar, nor sacrifice, nor incense, in use among Christians in those days.

5thly. St Augustin in his third book of christian doctrine, says; "To eat the flesh of Christ, is a figure teaching us to partake of Christ's passion and to imprint in our memories with delight and profit that Christ was crucified for us."

6thly. That the doctrine of a figurative presence in the sense of Protestants, was held by numbers of Christians since the beginning of the eighth century, is beyond all controversy. It is plain that the Church, since the time of the second Council of Nice, was divided, upon this head, into three different parties; one for a real presence by Transubstantiation, another for a real presence by Consubstantiation, or a physical union of the bread with Christ, and the third for a figurative presence only. That this figurative presence was held by the Iconoclasts or Image-breakers, (of whom I shall speak more at large hereafter,) and all the councils, crowned heads, &c. that opposed the Council of Nice is plain from this single circumstance, viz. that Transubstantiation, private masses, prayers for the dead, the worship of angels and saints, relics, &c. went hand in hand since that time, so that to this day, whoever was found to affirm or deny the one, was found also to affirm or deny all the rest. There was not one of those Councils, &c. that did not expressly condemn one or more of those articles, nay some of them have expressly condemned all.

Now I shall shew that the doctrine of the real presence has no foundation in Scripture; and then I shall point out how it first sprung up in the Church. I shall confine myself to those passages of Scripture, where the advocates for this doctrine seem chiefly to rest, viz. the 6th chapter of St. John, the words of the institution, and the 11th chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians.

As to the 6th of John, it is plain from the order of time when these words were spoken, being long before the institution of the Eucharist, as also from the occasion, the connexion and design of the whole discourse, that this chapter has no relation to the last supper. Our Saviour took occasion from the miracle of the loaves, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, to establish the doctrine and characterize the benefits of the incarnation by the figures of bread and wine, &c. the usual style of the Old Testament upon similar occasions, as was before observed. Nor did the murmuring disciples find fault with the obscurity or boldness of his allusions, for they had been well used to such a figurative style, but with his saying that there was no salvation without believing and professing the incarnation in the whole extent of his doctrine, as they conceived it. For in order to convince them of his divinity, which was the main object of his discourse, he asked them (verse 62) whether they would not believe it when they should see him ascend to where he was before. Besides, St. John had no occasion to speak of the last supper, that being sufficiently established by the other three Evangelists. The main design of his gospel, as he sufficiently signifies by what he says, chapter 20. 31. was to assert the divinity of Christ. When Cerinthus and Ebion started up and denied the divine incarnation, the bishops of Asia prevailed upon this Apostle to supply the deficiencies of the other three Evangelists upon this point.

Moreover, our Saviour's words are true when understood of the benefits of the incarnation; but absolutely false, when understood of the last supper. For he says, unless one eat of the flesh of the Son of Man. &c. he shall have no life in him. Now certainly, the receiving the sacrament is not necessary to the temporal life; and our adversaries do not pretend it is necessary to salvation, it being with them only a *sacramentum vivorum*. Add to this, that whosoever eateth the flesh of Christ, &c. in the above sense, and which was that of St. Augustin and several others, hath eternal life as much as it is possible by an act of faith; whereas there are thousands that eat and drink in the sacramental way, who have no right to eternal life. As to the words of the institution, it is plain from what I have said on the style of Scripture relative to sacraments, last wills or testaments, moral instructions, &c. that a figurative sense is what naturally occurred to the apostles, and what they must have understood those words in. For no one had ever heard since the creation, that the substance of one body was at any time changed into the substance of another, the accidents and appearances remaining the same as they were before. How then could the apostles think of such a change? They had often heard, as I have already observed, the sign of a thing called by the name of the thing signified, and every inanimate thing called by the heathens, the body or part of the body of God; but such a change as we are talking of, had never entered



into the thoughts of any man. Whatever obscurity there might have been in our Saviour's words, he sufficiently cleared it up, by ordering the apostles to take bread and wine, which by a figure of speech well known among the Jews, he called his body and blood, as a sign, a memorial, and commemoration of his incarnation, passion, &c. just as the paschal lamb was by the same figure of speech, called the Lord's Passover, and ordered to be taken as a sign, a memorial and commemoration of the same Passover.

The institution of this sacrament, whether understood in a Popish or Protestant sense, would have been a mere idle ceremony, if it did not serve as a means for conveying to us some of the benefits of the incarnation. Now I ask if some of those benefits be not conveyed to us by baptism? And is the water transubstantiated? What occasion then for transubstantiating bread and wine, when those spiritual benefits could be communicated here as in baptism.

When they are pressed by the impossibility of this transubstantiation, whereby our saviour's body should exist in several thousands of places at once they allege a new kind of reproduction, the strangest paradox that was ever heard of, whereby they maintain that the self same identical soul, for instance, may, at one and the same time, be possessed of the joys of heaven and suffer in the flames of hell; and that the same soul may begin to exist 20, or an 100 or a 1000 years after it first began to exist, though it continued in existence all along. These are contradictions that the heathens were strangers to. They never held, as the Romanists do, that the same identical soul and body could exist in different places and times at once; nor that a man could receive his mouth into his mouth, and his head and body and all into his mouth and stomach, and his stomach into his stomach, &c. If these be not contradictions I defy any man upon earth to shew me one.

As to St. Paul's words in the eleventh chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, I shall clear them up by pointing out the rise and progress of real presence and transubstantiation.

There was a custom established, in the primitive times of christianity, of bringing meat and drink to the place of public worship, and taking it in common together; and then the Lord's supper in commemoration not only of his death and sufferings, but also of what he and the apostles did at the last supper. The design of this custom was, that the poor should equally partake of those feasts with the rich, and that they should all meet and enjoy and part with each other in christian love and decency. But, even in the apostle's times, the contrary fell out, as generally happens on occasions of public joy and festivity; people got drunk and quarrelled and committed the most scandalous irregularities. This St. Paul inveighs against in the above-mentioned chapter. This he calls not discerning the Lord's body or feast from their other common meals or feasts. This he calls eating and drinking unworthily, a phrase not to be found any where else in scripture, as by it the primitive design of those love-feasts was utterly perverted.

As those Agape's or love-feasts gave occasion to such abuses, they were in process of time utterly abolished, and a custom was introduced of receiving the sacrament fasting. But such is the depravity of human nature, that men fell upon this occasion from one extreme into another. The custom of receiving the sacrament fasting though harmless in itself and wise for the above reasons, gave birth to the notion of a real presence of the body of Christ, just as the mistaken meaning of the Egyptian, and other symbols, tho' harmless and useful in their primitive institution, gave birth to all the idolatry and superstition of the heathen world. It gave the people an occasion of conceiving a high notion of the sacrament, especially as they heard it called the body of Christ; and as they had been passionately fond of mysteries, and had their imaginations still infected with a taint of idolatry, they figured to themselves, that the bread of the eucharist must be the body of Christ in the heathen sense already mentioned, and which they had been well acquainted with. Thus the notion of a real presence was introduced by the ignorant vulgar. But according as this notion spread new systems were multiplied, and every one began to philosophise in his own way to justify the popular opinion and worship. As many of the heathen philosophers held, that the whole material world was the body of God



and therefore that the people were justifiable in worshipping inanimate things as being at least so many parts of the body of God, so, many of the primitive fathers (as they had been originally bred heathens and consequently brought many heathen notions with them into the christian religion, for instance, the pre-existence of souls and their detrusion into human bodies, there to be punished for the sins they had committed in that pre-existent state) in order to justify the popular worship of the bread, and to account for Christ's calling the bread his body, supposed that the bread was phisically united to his divinity; and to illustrate their opinion, they alleged a parallel instance of the union wrought in the virgin's womb between his divinity and humanity. Accordingly they used to say that Christ held his body in his hand, which, in the supposition any man may easily conceive. But, as the bread was still bread, and though according to this hypothesis it was become the body of Christ, yet could not be called the body that was born of the Virgin and suffered on the cross, others struck out into new paths and at last hit upon the system of transubstantiation; and according as this new notion prevailed, the patrons and abettors of the other were by way of ridicule called *Stercoranists*, because they held what was the natural consequence of their doctrine, that the body of Christ was felt, tasted, broke, digested in the stomach, and passed into the draught like all other aliments.

Thus it was that the doctrine or Transubstantiation was first broached. But still it gained no established footing before the eighth century. It was by the second council of Nice held in the year 787, that it was first solemnly adopted. The pope and his faction at Nice, of whom I have already spoken under the article of image-worship, found their account in it, as they thought to baffle the arguments and measures of the image-breakers. Now religion began to degenerate by wholesale. Now miracles began to multiply to support the credit of this imposture. At last it was carried into a law when the eclipse of the church was in its greatest darkness.

This doctrine of transubstantiation served two other important purposes. It helped to inspire the poor ignorant people with an extraordinary veneration for the sacrament, and to raise priests to the same exorbitant power they enjoyed in heathenism, and make them transcend God himself, which Seneca says, every wise man does. For, by it they pretend to make their Maker, and command him down upon their altars when they please. For which purposes, they turned religion into what would feed the devotion, and please the imagination of the vulgar best, a system of pompous but mystical pagantry. Thus this doctrine, that was spawned by ignorance, was nursed by credulity and established by avarice, faction, and ambition.

## AURICULAR CONFESSION

Has been likewise established upon a false interpretation of scripture, or, rather scripture reserved only as a colourable pretext to give it sanction. The primitive christians, as is usual with all those who profess a new religion, carried their devotional zeal, almost in every thing to extravagance. The heathens used to reproach them with their not having such pious, austere, mortified people, nor such perfect professions and states of life as they had. This raised an emulation among the christians and gave occasion to the austerities, mortifications and penitential devotions of the primitive times. It was this scrupulous zeal that, for instance, made them administer the rites of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist, to children all at one and the same time. They were blinded so far by it as to think that there was no salvation without all three. It has been customary enough since the beginning of the world, with friends and intimates to confess their faults one to another, especially in cases of personal inquiry. St. James, in order to promote friendship, mutual love and confidence among christians, recommended to them to do the same. As the primitive christians were upon the extreme, they brought one another to make this confession publicly before the congregation; but the discipline was so indiscreet, and produced such fatal effects that at last it was entirely suppressed. In the mean time the

christian clergy, according as they got any established footing, set themselves to work upon the plan of the politics, maxims, rites, &c. of the heathen as was already observed. They bethought themselves that nothing would render them more absolute and consequently more respectable, than a knowledge of the secrets of hearts. They remembered how formidable the Greek parasites and dangles made themselves at Rome by the art of discovering the secrets of families. They availed themselves of the popular zeal and accordingly struck out the discipline of auricular or private confession, whereby St. Jame's words were sufficiently fulfilled in the eyes of the ignorant multitude, the inconveniences of public confession obviated, and their own ambitious views gratified and secured; and to give sanction to this discipline, they alleged the words of our Saviour: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall he bound in heaven," &c. and pretended that they were thereby invested with an absolute authoritative power of remitting and retaining sins which they pleaded they could not exercise, without a correlative obligation bound upon the people to make a distinct confession of their sins to them. Thus it was, that the discipline of auricular confession was first established. And to shew that this discipline was instituted principally in favour of the clergy considered in contrast with the laity, there is no punishment specified any where in the whole body of the canon-law to be inflicted on any ecclesiastic, who reveals the secrets of confession; whereas, when the pope and his clergy are considered in contrast with each other, the injunctions and punishments are precise, rigorous, and exorbitant. If any man, for instance, counterfeits opens, or secrets any of the pope's bulls, rescripts or letters, he incurs an excommunication by the very fact, whereas no such punishment is incurred for theft, robbery murder or the like. The reason is, the former is necessary to assert the papal power, the latter is not.

Now such is the notion the people entertain of the magic power of absolution, that this discipline is rather an incentive to vice and degeneracy, than a remedy for spiritual disorders. It rather confirms than roots out evil habits. A man who confesses his sins and perhaps performs the penance enjoined, never thinks more of them except to repeat them the next day, and perhaps the next hour, and repeat the confession accordingly; whereas, the man who receives no absolution of this kind, 'works his salvation with fear and trembling' he knows that nothing will be available without his own personal repentance and amendment, and therefore, he will always be afraid that he has not done enough towards obtaining a remission of his sins. This will keep him alert and make him often think of the same sins, and as often renew his endeavours to perfect his repentance; whereas those who receive the popish absolution, are so far from thinking of their past sins with fear and trembling, that sometimes they insolently declare at the gallows after a juridical and public conviction, that they are not guilty of the crimes for which they are justly punished. A remarkable instance of this kind happened at Tralce, the third of September the year 1768, as inserted in the Leinster Journal, when Daniel Higgins, denied at the place of execution, the fact of which he had been juridically convicted, and which he confessed in the presence of Nicholas Madgett and Martin O'Connor. This prevarication deserves the more to be noticed as one of the witnesses is, if I be not mistaken, parish priest of Tralce and titular bishop of Kerry. As therefore the common people cannot be withheld, by an apprehension of punishment in the other world, from committing outrages in this, while the discipline of absolution is tolerated, I think with submission to the wisdom of the legislature, a law ought to be made and sufficiently promulgated, whereby popish priests might be restrained from going to any of those felons, either in private or public. How monstrous it is in a christian country, where idolatry is discountenanced by law, to suffer a priest to put a crucifix into the hands of a convict at the gallows, in I may say the face of the nation, and encourage him to kiss and hug that idol. To tolerate this practice in so public a manner, is indirectly encouraging idolatry

and superstition. I am as averse to persecution as any man, for nothing can be more diametrically opposite to the spirit of the gospel; but to avoid one extreme, we are to take care not to run into another. It is usual with some to say, that one drop of zeal is enough to contaminate the ocean, for which reason they disclaim all zeal in matters of religion. But, with submission to superior learning and judgment, I think that zeal is one of the noblest things in the world. Religion is the ornament and glory of the creation, and the basis of our happiness in this and the other world; yet how often has the abuse of it filled the world with confusion and desolation. It is even so with zeal. The best things are the worst when abused. There is a golden mean to be observed in all things without which nothing can be right. Though a hot and inordinate zeal be the bane of religion and government, yet without zeal we should have neither religion nor government. It was by zeal that the christian religion was propagated, and so many thousands of martyrs were enabled to fight the glorious fight of faith, and to conquer the enemies of the gospel by shedding their own blood in defence of it. It was zeal that gave birth to the glorious reformation, and enabled so many christian champions to burst from the fetters of idolatry and superstition, to brave the terrors of inquisitionary persecutions and cruelties, and restore religion to its primitive simplicity and beauty. It is zeal that makes our military heroes wade through fields of blood in defence of their king and country. In a word, though the abuse of zeal has often involved the world in a deluge of evils, yet I may say that zeal is the blood and soul and life of religion and government. Hence it follows that a man who has no zeal has no religion; and consequently, he that has religion must necessarily have as much zeal as will point out a track of light for him, that shall run uniformly between too much lenity on the one hand, and too much severity on the other. Therefore though the spirit of the gospel is utterly abhorrent from sanguinary laws and persecutions, yet the same gospel teaches, that certain legal restraints are no way inconsistent with the spirit of true religion. For such is the rebellious disposition of the sons of Adam, that if they be not fettered by salutary laws, they will at last make such bounds as to leap over all bounds and break down the inclosures of all rule and order.

## EXTREME UNCTION

Is another piece of superstitious mummery supported like the rest by a false interpretation of scripture. There was a custom among the Jews and the heathens, from time immemorial, of anointing both heal and sick for the benefit of strength and health. They found by experience that rubbing the sick with oil was an excellent restorative; and when the heal anointed themselves they found new vigour diffused through their joints. It was usual with people, when they went into company, to perfume themselves with oil or essence. Oil was made use of upon the solemn occasions of inauguration &c. and even for anointing the mummies and other dead bodies before they were deposited in the earth. There are above thirty passages in the old testament where the use of oil is mentioned. It was used for all the above purposes in our Saviour's time. Accordingly we find, that when he sat at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came and perfumed his head and feet with precious ointment, whereupon he complained that the man of the house had not prevented her, by paying him that compliment which was usually paid to strangers. He took occasion therefrom to put them in mind, as he often did before, that he was to suffer, and said, in allusion to the above customs, that she did it for his burial. Hence it is, that some women went the third day after his death to his grave with spices and ointments to embalm his body. Now, as the use of oil for these purposes was never condemned, St. James recommends, that when the sick were rubbed with oil, it should be

\* Math. 26. 7. Luke 7. 46.



done in the name of the Lord, in hopes the sick person might the sooner recover his health. This was all that he meant, for he says: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up," which must be understood of the recovery of health.† He only spoke of the oil occasionally as a custom practised among the Jews. But, in process of time, his words here, as upon a former occasion, were perverted, and the unction converted into a sacrament. It was with the use of oil as with the talismans, amulets, charms, written tickets hung about children's necks and the like, that were used for preservative or restorative purposes, there was no weaning the ignorant people from the one no more than from the other; nay, they had an unconquerable desire for the unction for the reasons above-mentioned. When the clergy found it troublesome and expensive to answer all the capricious calls of the ignorant people, they thought it expedient to dignify the unction with the title of a sacramental rite, in order to make the people pay as often as they call for it, which pay they softened with the specious name of religious offering. And, to give it still the greater air of a religious ordinance, it was ordered, that the oil should be consecrated, and that only by a bishop who, assisted by his clergy, must, with great parade and ceremony, blow the holy ghost thrice, in the form of a cross, into every jar of oil, and then prostrate and adore it by bending the knee thrice, and saying: *Ave sanctum oleum*. Then, as the bishop is to be a sharer in the emoluments, the priests must make an offering of five or six and twenty shillings a piece or more for every half thimble-full of the holy oil, which they take and retail in their turns to the poor people. Thus, this unction became at last a beneficial traffic.

But there is a greater cheat than this in the doctrine of extreme unction. Such, it is pretended, are the intention, efficacy and virtues of this rite that, if it be necessary to the salvation of the person who is anointed, that he should recover, he will, but if this be not necessary, he will not.‡ Hence it follows, 1st. That if the person recovers, he was in a state of damnation, after he was anointed. 2nd. That if he does not recover, he died in a state of salvation. Therefore, nobody was ever damned that was anointed at the hour of his death. Therefore, also, nobody that recovers had benefit by any sacrament he received before the unction; otherwise he would not have been in a state of damnation. Upon the whole then, it is plain, as this sacrament like the rest, is said to operate *ex opere operato*, whoever has a mind never to die, needs only be in a state of damnation when he is anointed.

\*Chap. 5. 15.

† It is to be observed that he does not ascribe the recovery of health to the oil, but to the prayers of the church, to show that he lays greater stress upon the latter than upon the former. And even then his words are not to be taken rigorously to the letter, otherwise this whole ceremony would have been an elixir of immortality, and then it would follow that no one ever died in the apostle's days or after, while there was an elder of the church to be had and to anoint or pray.

‡ I remember that when I stood an examen for the degree of Licence, these arguments were urged against me by one of the doctors. I shifted about as well as I could, and made distinctions and subdistinctions without measure to save my credit. The doctor took me up at every answer and run me at last into a dilemma, whereupon he laughed, but suddenly waved the subject, for fear to be sure, that he might be suspected by any of the company, though perhaps none of them believed the doctrine of extreme unction any more than he.

THE END.











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